THE SEA TRADERS

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THE SEA TRADERS

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1921

The Sea Traders

By

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Cassell and Company, Ltd
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne

First published *October* 1921.
Reprinted *December* 1921, *April* 1922.

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The Sea Traders

CHAPTER I

THE RIDDLE OF THE ISLAND EMPIRE

England under the Heel of Conquerors—The Coming of the Romans—The Saxon Ascendancy—The Heptarchy and the Invading Danes—Deliverance from Servitude—England Free.

THAT the little island of Britain, harried by Saxon and Dane, and ground under the heel of conquerors for centuries, should have become at last the pivot of an empire embracing nearly one-quarter of the land surface of the earth, constitutes a riddle to which the historian offers no solution. The explanation is possibly to be found in the fact that the history of this great expansion has been written by landsmen. They have told us when king succeeded king; they have described innumerable battles on land; and they have explained the growth of our system of government; but being themselves without the sea-sense, they have not supplied us with the secret of the riddle which the British Empire presents when we glance at the map of the world and recall the record of earlier centuries.

Great events are often concealed in trite phrases which spring to the lip without thought of their significance. Every child reads in his history at school of the landing of the Romans. "The Roman Conquest" means little or nothing to him, and the grown-up man or woman goes through life without realizing that this country was subject to the Romans for about four hundred and fifty years. They found the inhabitants little better than barbarians, who knew next to nothing of the culture which had flourished in past centuries in Asia and Africa, and which afterwards bloomed in Greece. By the Roman conquerors the natives were regarded with contempt; they lived amongst them, but mixed little with them. England was to the Romans their most distant colony, to be held by force and ruled with all the authority which flowed from the Imperial city of Rome. And thus it seemed that this small island, tossed like an afterthought out of the side of Europe, was destined to remain the despised dependent of one of the great empires of the continent. For after Boadicea's vain attempt to drive out the Romans, the conquerors remained absolute masters of the country until at last Rome herself began to decay. The distant legions were then called home, and the natives left to muddle on as best they could without the masters under whose yoke they had existed for so long that the memory of no man or woman held the recollection of the day when England had been free.

The rude inhabitants did not know what use to make of the freedom which had come to them through no efforts of their own. The country was soon embroiled in internecine warfare and became the easy prey of marauders who swept across the North Sea. Jutes from the peninsula of Jutland, which the battle of 1916 has made for ever famous; Saxons from the regions between the Eider and the Weser, to-day the home of the Germans; and Angles from Schleswig, recently restored under the Peace Treaty to Denmark, overran a large part of England and at last became its masters. For another five hundred years and more Little England lived not its own life, but according to the habits of its invaders. The Jutes held Kent, Canterbury being the seat of their authority; from Chichester, Winchester and London the Saxons exercised their sway over Sussex, Essex and Wessex; and York was the capital of the Angles, who ruled Northumbria, East Anglia and Mercia.

These seven kingdoms were known as the Heptarchy, which only ceased to exist when the Danes, or Norsemen, began to harass the coast with piratical incursions. These strangers had learnt the secret of the strength which lies in the sea and the power which resides in the ship. Egbert, King of Wessex, was seized with the truth that success against the marauders was to be found in union, and thus it came about that the Heptarchy, which meant division and weakness,

was dissolved, and Egbert became the first King of England. In that way the country passed under some sort of united rule, but for years a struggle for predominance continued between the Saxons and the Danes; at one time a Saxon king was on the throne, and at another the crown was worn by a Dane.

And then the Normans came. The ships which should have stayed the progress of William the Conqueror had been dispersed, and the invaders' progress across the Channel met with no resistance. A flat bit of beach was selected for the landing, and at Pevensey, near Hastings, the whole force disembarked *unopposed* on September 28, 1066. If the fleet entrusted with the guardianship of the English coast had been at its station off Sandwich, the whole course of English history might have been changed; for the Norman seamen were encumbered by many soldiers with their accoutrements, and the probability is that the nimble English ships would have sunk the Norman armada.

Thus it happened that England, having been conquered successively by the Romans, the Saxons and the Danes, passed under the rule of the Normans. Macaulay has declared that "During the century and a half which followed the Conquest there is, to speak strictly, no English history." For the Conqueror and his descendants to the fourth generation were not Englishmen; most of them were born in France; they spent the greater

part of their lives in France; their ordinary speech was French; almost every high office was filled by a Frenchman; every acquisition which they made on the continent estranged them more and more from the population of this island. The historian has suggested that if the Plantagenet kings, who followed after the early Normans, had succeeded, as at one time seemed likely, in uniting all France under their government, England might never have had an independent existence. "Her princes, her lords, her prelates, would have been men differing in race and language from the artisans and the tillers of the earth. The revenues of her great proprietors would have been spent in festivities and diversions on the banks of the Seine. The noble language of Milton and Burke would have remained a rustic dialect, without a literature, a fixed grammar, or a fixed orthography, and would have been contemptuously abandoned to the use of the boors. No man of English extraction would have risen to eminence except by becoming in speech and habits a Frenchman." England would have had no place among the nations of the world, but would have worked out her narrow destiny as a colony of a great continental Power.

The weakness and the lack of statesmanship of a king of direct Norman descent proved to be England's salvation. William the Conqueror and his successors had ranged far and wide on the Continent, but at last there ascended to the throne a despicable figure in John, who was

eventually driven ignominiously from Normandy, the land of his fathers. Hundreds of Norman barons had found England a pleasant place in which to live from time to time, and they had grown rich and powerful. Now they were compelled to choose between Little England and the continent where great happenings were occurring, offering opportunities of gain to men of martial ardour who could count on hundreds of vassals joining their standards when the sound of war, profitable war, reached them. Many of them decided to make the little island their permanent home. "Shut up by the sea with the people whom they had hitherto oppressed and despised, they gradually came to regard England as their country and the English as their countrymen. The two races, so long hostile, soon found that they had common interests and common enemies. Both alike were aggrieved by the tyranny of a bad king."

Once again it was the failure of sea-power which had changed the course of England's history, for if John had secured command of the Channel, as he might well have done, he would, probably, never have been driven out of Normandy. His failure was a happy event in English history, for henceforward England was able to live her own life. With the death of King John from chagrin over the reverses he had suffered in Normandy, England became herself once again. The old feuds were buried and the various races inter-

mingled; within less than a century the Englishman, a distinctive type among the peoples of the world, had been born to a proud destiny.

How has it happened that this small subjugated island, divided between a score or so of French barons, has become in less than nine hundred years a world-wide Commonwealth? There is only one answer. It is written round our coasts—the sea.

Because there has resided, deep in the being of its population, an instinctive love and ever-growing mastery of the sea, this country has lifted itself out of obscurity and secured its liberty for nine centuries. The island refuge—the edge of the known world as it was—of the most daring of the earlier European tribes; the goal of the ablest and most vigorous of the Saxon and Danish adventurers; for over four hundred years the colonial home of the younger sons of the Roman Empire; the ultimate absorber of the fiery Norman nobles who came to rob and stayed to love—slowly behind the Channel mists a race of strong and peculiar quality was formed.

In this little, despised, uncultured and unregarded England a nation was being moulded of stubborn and idealistic but essentially law-abiding and liberty-loving men, who were to discover, in the seas washing their coast, the foundations of the world's greatest empire. As will be seen from the following pages, it was for many centuries a slow process. The great lessons

of sea-power were not rapidly learnt. The earlier conquests of England on the continent, using sea power at short range, supply evidence of this. But they were learnt at last, and the nation had no better teachers than those stout sea-traders, merchant-adventurers, some of whose stories it is proposed briefly to recount in this volume.

Similarly the birth of England, as a self-conscious and independent English nation, was a gradual process. It was probably not complete until the middle of the fourteenth century and the vigorous reign of Edward III.

To visitors from the richer and more cultured Mediterranean civilization, who came to its shores to trade in their small ships, England must have seemed a very rude and inferior little country; and it is hard for us to construct now the sort of picture that it must have presented to the Lombard merchants. Apart from the strategic roads built by the Romans, dependent for their upkeep on local landowners, there were only a few scantily-trodden field tracks, traversed on horseback or in clumsy carts, while the art of bridge-making had practically died out, not to be revived again for a couple of hundred years. Of the principal towns London was by far the largest, with a population of about 40,000, York and Bristol coming next with about 10,000 each. With the possible exception of Coventry, Norwich and Lincoln, and, it may be, Colchester in Essex, no other town was so big as, for instance, Swanage is to-day.

The total population of the country was, in fact, less than 3,000,000, a figure which had not very greatly increased in Elizabethan times, and which was seriously depleted in the middle of the fourteenth century owing to the ravages of the Black Death.

Of this population at least three-quarters were scattered over the country in agricultural pursuits, and gathered together in exclusive and illiterate little communities—largely self-governing—about the various manor houses. The staple food grown was, of course, wheat; but the conditions under which it was sown were still so primitive that the average yield from the seed was only a quarter of what it is at present. Winter roots were unknown, and there were no such things in England as potatoes, turnips, parsnips or carrots.

Most of the houses were built of wood, except that, here and there, where houses adjoined each other, the sides might be built of masonry in order to prevent the spreading of fire. Glass was almost unknown; there was usually an open hearth in the middle of the living-room; warm clothes had to be put on indoors in order to counteract the draughts; such chairs as were to be found in the average dwelling were but planks on trestles; sanitation scarcely existed, and vermin afflicted both rich and poor.

It is true that, in the houses of the well-to-do, such articles as feather-beds, linen sheets, serge blankets and cushions were to be found; but even

in these houses the conditions of life were such as would hardly be tolerated anywhere to-day. It was generally impossible, for instance, to warm one's hands, as it has been said, without burning one's boots; while the price of a tallow candle—worth four times its weight in beefsteak—led people to retire early to bed as a matter of necessary economy. Such things as night attire and pocket-handkerchiefs were unknown and therefore unused. There was no tea and no coffee, and sugar was a rare and almost wholly medicinal luxury. In the average house slabs of bread, afterwards given to the poor, were the usual plates, and meat was eaten with the fingers, table knives and forks being practically never seen.

This then was the England of the first real English—the English of the reign of Edward III—a little, almost roadless island of villages and rough timber houses, in which lived people who had few of the things we regard as necessaries and none of our luxuries. Its total population was scarcely one-half of that of London of to-day; and the dreams of its rulers, when their eyes turned seawards, were of possessions on the continent of Europe. Those dreams were to fade, as we shall see, from the national consciousness. But it had already been realized that, if they were to be attained, the lordship of the local seas was a first necessity. By the victory of Sluys, in which no fewer than seven hundred English ships—merchant ships of course—were engaged, Edward III had

become justified in claiming this command. Little as it could have been presaged, it was in that victory, in 1340, and in the sea impulse that it registered, that there lay hidden the secret of the British Empire and all that it stands for to-day.

CHAPTER II

THE DAWN OF COMMERCE

A Picture of Old London—The Importance of the Merchant—Master Philpot and King Richard II.—The Audacity of John Mercer, the Pirate—His Defeat and Capture—Master Philpot and the King's Council—Belated Honours.

THE fusion of the dominant races which had settled in this island may be said to have been complete by the reign of Edward III, and it is from this king's accession that the expansion of England and the growth of its trade and sea power must be dated. He was a statesman as well as a warrior. He encouraged commerce, inviting Flemish handicraftsmen to settle in this country, laid the foundations on which constitutional government in this country has since rested, and defeated and captured the French king. In Master John Philpot, who was to rise to be Lord Mayor of London, we have a typical figure of this period, a man of robust physique, sound judgment, and jolly wit—in short, an Englishman. In building up his own fortunes he furnished a fine example of the influence which even in those early days the individual citizen could exercise on the destiny of the nation.

Various factors, of course, apart from the peculiar absorptive stubbornness of the Saxon

temperament, were concerned in this final integration of the English race. The successful wars with France, with their outstanding victories of Sluys at sea in 1340, and of Cressy and Poictiers on land in 1346 and 1350 respectively, acted no doubt as a strong unifying influence; and, in a lesser degree, the military victories in Scotland served a similar purpose. But it is arguable that the culminating agency was the native genius of Geoffrey Chaucer, in which the English language, as we now understand it, found its first and most glorious literary expression.

The military victories of Edward III have assumed too conspicuous a place in history as it has been hitherto popularly taught, and a far greater importance ought really to be attached to the immense strides in trade and commerce that England made during these fifty years. For the first time, with the full recognition and indeed with the encouragement of the monarch, the merchants of England began to step into a definite and important place in the communal life of the country and the councils of the State. Thus we find, not very long after the battle of Poictiers, Harry Picard, a wealthy wine merchant of London, entertaining as his guests no fewer than four monarchs—the King of England, the King of Scotland, the King of France and the King of Cyprus. Already the doom of the armoured knights and nobles had been faintly uttered from the mouths of the

primitive cannon fired at Cressy; and the importance of the trading cities was already challenging the hitherto unquestioned supremacy of the territorial feudalism of the great barons.

Of these cities London, of course, had already assumed the leadership, and before considering, in the person of Master Philpot, one of its ablest, most characteristic and independent citizens, we may try to picture the capital, of whose commercial enterprise he was so largely the product. Within its four walls it contained the most famous markets of the country. In what is now known as Cheapside many articles of food such as bread, cheese, fruit and poultry were sold by dealers at their stalls on either side of the road. In what is now known as Cornhill merchants dealt in grains of all sorts and manufactured articles of iron and wood. The grocers chiefly congregated in Queen Street.

In what is still called the Poultry such poulterers as were freemen of the City of London conducted their trade, while in Leadenhall, where there is still a market in game and poultry, dealers who were not citizens were allowed to carry on their business. The butchers cried their wares in Newgate, while in the neighbourhood of St. Mary Woolnoth the wool and cloth merchants used to meet for the purposes of their particular industry. All this, of course, was within the four walls of the old and circumscribed city, and the villages of Strand, Holborn and Charing Cross were "without the walls."

At this period England was still, as it remained for many centuries, almost overwhelmingly agricultural, and, in consequence, self-supporting as regarded food. The country was indeed able to export a limited amount of corn and fish, and some of its merchants were engaged in selling these things in foreign markets. For the purpose of self-protection, mutual help and insurance, the system of guilds was, before the accession of Edward III, fairly well established, and during his reign they were conceded many valuable privileges.

The selection of city officers and even of members of Parliament was placed in their hands, and by 1376 there were no fewer than forty-eight of these guilds or companies in the position to exercise this important right.

Into the history of this movement it is unnecessary to enter, but it is from these times, and even earlier, that many of the great City companies such as the Fishmongers', the Grocers', and the Mercers' Companies date their existence. Nor was their enterprise confined within the realms of this island. The great naval victory of Sluys, with King Edward's claim that he was, by right, Lord of the Four Seas, lent a stimulus to marine undertakings of all kinds. It was in this reign also that Macham, an Englishman, discovered Madeira and made the researches and observations that subsequently led the French to the discovery of the Canary Islands.

This, very briefly, was the London, and the mercantile atmosphere that went towards the building up of the private fortunes of John Philpot, though it was not until the death of the old King, after a year or two of dotage, that, as an alderman of London, he definitely stepped into the pages of history. He was then, as the most influential member of the great Grocers' Company, and one of the wealthiest and most honest and courageous of English merchants, the leading figure of a deputation from the City of London to the young King Richard II, then residing at Kennington. Considerably as the merchants and citizens of London doubted the capacity of the new monarch, we find Philpot, on June 22, 1377, addressing the young king in the following terms:

"We bring news, most excellent Prince," he said, "which without great sorrow we cannot rehearse, of the undoubted death of our most invincible King Edward, who hath kept and governed us and this kingdom for a long time in quiet peace. And now we beseech you on behalf of the citizens of London that you will have recommended to your good grace the City, your chamber, seeing that you are shortly to be our King and that to your rule we submit ourselves, bowing to your will and pleasure under your dominion to serve in word and deed."

He was well received by the King and his immediate councillors, but when, in September of the same year, Parliament met to vote a subsidy

to its new sovereign, so doubtful was it of the use to which the King would be likely to put the money, that a stipulation was made to the effect that the money should be put into the safe keeping of trustees. The Lord Mayor of London, William Walworth, and John Philpot himself, were appointed to undertake this trust; and in their persons we trace the first stage in the creation of the great office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

That was in the year 1377, and in the next, when he was himself Lord Mayor of London, Philpot took into his own hands, owing to the supineness of the Government, the suppression of a notorious pirate, one John Mercer, a Scot. This man and his father, who were nominally merchants of Perth, had made common cause with the enemy during the wars of Edward III against the French and were still harrying English shipping. The father, the year before, had been driven by a storm on to the Yorkshire coast, where he had been captured and interned in Scarborough Castle. The son, however, was still at large, capturing or sinking English vessels, and had even gone so far as to threaten the Mayor of Dover that he would burn that town if a ransom were not forthcoming.

Not directly hurt by these depredations, the nobles about the King had taken no active steps to deal with this pirate. But to the courageous and common-sense mind of Master John Philpot it was an intolerable situation, and he resolved to end it. Collecting, at his own expense, some

fourteen ships and a thousand picked men, he set sail, without permission of the Government, in search of John Mercer; and there is perhaps nothing more typically English in our sea records than the picture of this robust Chief Magistrate and public-spirited merchant laying aside his robes and thus putting out to sea.

Running down John Mercer in the Channel, or, as some accounts say, in the southern waters of the North Sea, he fought a fierce battle with him. The pirate had under his command no fewer than twenty-one vessels. Of these John Philpot captured or destroyed all but five, and sailed up the Thames again with five hundred prisoners, amongst whom was the redoubtable Mercer himself. The citizens of London were roused to enthusiasm by the victory, but not so the Government in the shape of the King's Council. Before this august body Philpot was charged with making war without the King's permission. His reply was characteristic and belongs to English history.

"Know, Sir," he said to the Earl of Stafford, "that I did not expose myself, my money, and my men to the dangers of the sea that I might deprive you and your colleagues of your knightly fame, or that I might win any myself, but in pity for the misery of the people of the country, which, from being a noble realm with dominion over other nations, had through your selfishness become exposed to the ravages of the vilest race. Not one of you would lift a hand for her defence. Therefore

it was that I gave of myself and my property for the safety and deliverance of my country."

To this the Earl could say nothing, and indeed Philpot's indictment was an unanswerable one. In spite, however, of the disfavour with which his action was regarded by the idle and decadent nobles in King Richard's court, Philpot continued stoutly to do his best for his country, very often at his own expense; in 1380 he redeemed the military equipment of several hundred soldiers, who had had to pawn these in order to procure themselves the means of living. In 1381 he was knighted, with his friend Sir William Walworth, the pressure of public gratitude for his services being too great for King Richard to withhold this recognition. Three years later, when he died, England lost one of the finest and most typical of her children.

He was indeed, as one of his contemporaries described him, "the most noble citizen that had ever travailed for the commodity over the whole realm more than all others of his time." But how many frequenters of the City of London, as they turn daily into Philpot Lane, cast a thought to that old seaman merchant whose name is still commemorated in the narrow thoroughfare of the city that he served so well?

CHAPTER III

MERCHANT SEAMEN OF BRISTOL

Early Trade of Bristol—William Canynge and Henry VI.—His Trade with Iceland and the Baltic—The Effect of the Wars of the Roses—Henry VII., the First of the Tudors, and his Relations with John Cabot and his Sons—The Discovery of Newfoundland—Sebastian Cabot and his Adventures—His Meeting with Robert Thorne—The Family of the Thornes and their Overseas Enterprise.

DURING the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, in which John Philpot, the subject of our last chapter, lived and flourished, Bristol was only second to London in size and importance. From very early times it was a seaport town of considerable influence. During the reigns of some of the Saxon monarchs it was the centre of a flourishing slave trade, Saxon slaves being bought and exported to the Danish settlements in Ireland. Throughout the period covered by the Norman sovereigns it conducted a comparatively large and prosperous overseas commerce, particularly with Iceland and Norway, with fish as one of the principal articles of trading.

Indeed, throughout this period, the prosperity of the town depended almost entirely upon its natural advantages as a seaport, and it lagged behind many far smaller towns as a centre of

industry. Thus, while for some generations such towns as Hull and Boston and Winchester were becoming wealthy as the result of the woollen weaving industry introduced by the Flemish artisans, Bristol was content to rest upon its laurels as the second greatest harbour town of England. How conservative it was can be gathered from its treatment of one of its citizens, an enterprising merchant, one Thomas Blanket, whose name is now a household word among us six hundred years later. This far-seeing merchant was, in the year 1340, fined by the civic authorities of Bristol for having caused various machines for weaving and making woollen cloths to be set up in his house, and in the houses of some of his friends, and for having hired weavers and other workmen to carry on the new industry.

Thanks, however, to the support of Edward III, this fine was remitted, and when the Bristol people, who were shrewd enough in their own way, perceived the value of this newly instituted addition to the mercantile resources of their town, they were generous in owning their mistake and honouring the pioneer. In 1342 Blanket was made Bailiff of Bristol, and in 1356 was one of a deputation of Bristol merchants that was summoned to Westminster to advise the King upon sundry matters of importance in the trade interests of the country. By this time the manufacture of cloth was rapidly becoming the chief industry of the town, and it was to remain so until the discovery of the New World

opened up other fields to the adventurous spirits of this western seaport.

Great as Thomas Blanket was, he was overshadowed, both in the councils of his own town and in that of the country generally, by a contemporary of his, one William Canynge, who was six times elected mayor of Bristol, and who represented the town as its member of Parliament in the years 1364, 1383 and 1384. Primarily an owner of ships with which he traded his wares, he afterwards took up cloth-making with great success; and, when he died in 1396, about ten years after John Philpot, he left a very large fortune to his son John.

This John Canynge carried on the traditions of his father, and like him was both mayor of Bristol and its representative in Parliament. He had two sons, Thomas and William, the former of whom was apprenticed to the Grocers' Company in London, from which position he rose to be its master in 1466, just before his death. He, too, attained high honours, being a member of Parliament and Lord Mayor of London. But it was his younger brother William who was destined to be the most illustrious member of this great and influential commercial family; and his fortunes, like those of his father and grandfather, were closely associated with the town of Bristol.

Born in 1399, in the year of Henry IV's accession to the throne, and the year after Richard Whittington—the famous Dick—had been elected

Lord Mayor of London for the first time, he seems, in his early twenties, to have been deeply engaged in exploiting the wealth of the Iceland fisheries. He was at any rate very intimately concerned with them as the following incident shows. Jealous of the large share of this fish trade that English merchants were obtaining, the King of Denmark, under the terms of a treaty to which Henry VI had agreed, forbade commerce on the part of English merchants with this portion of the territories of Denmark. One exception was made, however, in the person of William Canynge, who was expressly permitted, " in consideration of the great debt due to him from the subjects of Iceland and Finmark to load certain English ships with merchandise for those prohibited places and there to take fish and other goods in return."

That was in 1450, and during the next ten years he is recorded as being the owner of a fleet of ten vessels, the three largest of which, the *Mary and John*, the *Mary Redcliffe*, and the *Mary Canynge*, represented a total of 1,800 tons, and a capital cost, in present money, of about £30,000. In this fleet he employed some 800 seamen. With his vessels Canynge, a man of unbounded enterprise, opened up for English traders the rich ports of the Baltic —a commercial sphere in which the merchants of Flanders had hitherto reigned in almost unchallenged supremacy.

To this new sphere he came commended by Henry VI as his " beloved and eminent merchant

of Bristol"; he seems to have stood high in the estimation of this Lancastrian Plantagenet king. It was in 1451 that William Canynge first entered Parliament as member for Bristol, and we are told that the city allowed him for his expenses in London a sum of two shillings a day. He was one of the members who were asked to vote the sum of £1,000, to be levied from the seaport towns and expended upon a fleet for the protection of merchant vessels on the high seas; and it is an interesting side-light on Bristol's position in the country that it had to contribute a sum half as large as that contributed by London, and larger than that required of any other seaport town. When Parliament was dissolved in 1455, he was re-elected by his constituents, and the next year, for the third time, he became Mayor of Bristol.

The country was now at the beginning of the sordid era of the Wars of the Roses, a party quarrel chiefly waged by noblemen and their retainers, but one which, in spite of its disastrous general effect on the trade and commercial enterprise of England as a whole, left the agricultural and commercial life of the country singularly untouched. In the case of William Canynge, however, who, as we have seen, was identified rather prominently with the Lancastrian cause, the victory of the Yorkists, in the person of Edward IV, meant a very considerable financial loss. After entertaining the new king at Bristol, in his mayoral capacity, he found himself obliged

to contribute to the Royal Exchequer, a so-called benevolence, in proportion to his wealth, of no less than £20,000.

Possibly it was this fact, and the fact that many other of Bristol's merchants were similarly mulcted, together with the uncertainty of the general political outlook, that led William Canynge in 1466 to the formation of a Guild of his fellow merchants for the regulation of prices and for mutual protection and union against disaster. Here we see one of the earliest instances of a social policy that was, in later times, to undergo profound developments; and its immediate effects were to ensure for the commerce of Bristol remarkable prosperity throughout the difficult years that were to follow.

The Guild was formed during the last year of William Canynge's mayoralty, and upon its termination he decided to retire. He was sixty-seven; his life had been a crowded one beyond the experience of most men; he had acquired an immense fortune; he had enjoyed many honours; and he was becoming tired and anxious for rest. For six years he had been a widower. He had outlived most of his children, and the reigning monarch was one of whom he disapproved. He had made all the money that he wanted, and he had been a generous giver to many charities. He spent, for instance, a large sum in restoring the church of St. Mary Redcliffe; and it was here a year later, that having taken Holy Orders, he said his first mass.

Soon afterwards he was made Dean of Westbury, and in this capacity he lived another seven years. Among his fellow traders at Bristol, and indeed in all England he was second to none, and his name stands among the highest upon the roll of pre-Tudor English merchants.

Watching from the security of his ecclesiastical retreat the troubled years through which his country was passing, William Canynge may well have assured himself that in withdrawing from public life he had chosen the better part. But ten years after his death, in the person of Henry VII, the first of the Tudor monarchs, a new and happier era began to dawn in England. Accused by many of his contemporaries of a niggardly disposition, Henry VII's management of public affairs was certainly in advance of that of any of his predecessors since Edward III. With the conflicting claims of the opposed houses of York and Lancaster at last settled, the country drew a new breath and became conscious in itself of a changed spirit. The death pangs of the old feudalism had been prolonged but were now over, and the country turned with renewed vigour to its more practical problems.

Henry VII, the first of those Tudor monarchs under whom England was eventually to exercise so world-wide an influence, was perhaps more sensible of the importance of sea power than any English sovereign since Alfred the Great; and it was towards the promotion of the foreign com-

merce of his country that he bent his chief energies. This trade had hitherto been far more under the control of Continental than of native English merchants, while the ships in which the goods were carried were much more generally foreign than English. Thus in the first year of his reign Henry VII made a beginning of his new and self-imposed task by forbidding the import of Gascoigne and Guienne wines in any but English, Welsh or Irish vessels. In the year 1490 he concluded a treaty with Denmark, whereby Norway, Sweden and Iceland were reopened to the enterprise of English merchant seamen; and though for three years trade with Flanders was forbidden owing to political reasons, it was re-established in 1496 to the great satisfaction of both countries. It was to English traders, indeed, that the great city and harbour of Antwerp owed its early prosperity, since it had become the headquarters in Europe, in the year 1446, of the Company of Merchant Adventurers—a company to which Henry IV had granted a charter in 1406 under the title of the Brotherhood of St. Thomas à Becket. It was small wonder, therefore, that after the three years cessation of commerce, due to the Perkin Warbeck conspiracy, when the English merchants came again to their mansion at Antwerp they were received, as Bacon tells us, "with procession and great joy."

That was in 1496, by which time events had already occurred that were destined to alter

for ever the old trend of English thought and enterprise. In the year 1486 Bartholomew Diaz had first rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and four years later, Christopher Columbus had landed on the Bahamas Islands and laid the New World at the feet of the Old. This was the year, too, in which a new and illustrious name dawned among the company of English navigators—that of John Cabot of Bristol, a man of Venetian birth, who had long been settled as a merchant in Bristol, becoming to all intents and purposes an Englishman. Cautious as he was by temperament and training, Henry VII had been quick to grasp the possibilities that the new discoveries had opened to the Island Kingdom of which he was monarch. He therefore, on March 5, 1496, granted letters patent to John Cabot and his three sons, Sebastian, Louis and Sanzio, for the discovery of new lands; and in May of the following year, with three hundred sailors and a couple of vessels, the stout-hearted Bristol merchant set sail for the unknown on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. His orders were to keep to the north, since Henry VII had no desire to provoke trouble with the mighty and world-wide Empire of Spain by the appearance of English mariners in a region originally opened up by the Spanish.

It was on June 24 of this year that Cabot discovered Newfoundland, which he believed to be part of the possessions of the Cham of Tartary, and from which he proceeded to the further dis-

covery of the coast of North America. This was about the same time as the southern part of the continent was discovered by the Florentine sailor, Amerigo Vespucci, who was afterwards to give his name to both North and South America. On their return the voyagers brought back with them three men from across the ocean to be presented to the King, and these have been described as being clothed in the skins of wild beasts and speaking in an unknown tongue. It is also recorded that Henry VII granted "to him that found the new island ten pounds." This does not appear to have been an over generous reward, but we are told that nevertheless John Cabot met with much honour; that he was dressed in silk; and that the English ran after him like mad people, so that he was able to enlist as his crew any number that he liked. It is probable, however, that soon after this voyage John Cabot himself died, as the next expedition was fitted out by his son Sebastian. In this several London and Bristol merchants adventured stocks of goods for the purpose of trans-Atlantic trade, including, we are told, coarse cloth, caps and laces; and the King himself lent financial support and every royal encouragement.

Primarily the object of this voyage, undertaken in the year 1498, was the discovery—as it was that of so many subsequent ones—of the North-West Passage to Cathay—the overland route to the East being very precarious, if not actually closed, by the victories of the Ottoman invasion. But as a

commercial proposition this voyage was not much of a success, nor was the supposed passage found, although from the point of view of the geographer it was a voyage of the greatest interest. In spite of continual dangers from floating icebergs the coast of Labrador was reached, and from there Sebastian Cabot sailed south along the shores of what are now known as New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Maine, to Chesapeake Bay. The final results were nevertheless considered very disappointing by the promoters of the adventure and especially by Henry VII; and although Sebastian Cabot made another voyage the next year, it was without any of the support that had at first been given him.

The impetus that this Bristol merchant seaman had lent to English oversea enterprise was all the same by no means unfruitful; and in 1501 three Bristol merchants, Richard Warde, Thomas Ashehurst and John Thomas succeeded in obtaining from the King a licence to explore, at their own cost, all the islands, countries, regions and provinces in the eastern, western, northern and southern seas not already known to Christians, with an exclusive right of trading thither for ten years. This monopoly was afterwards extended to cover a period of forty years, in most of which these merchants appear to have organized at least one voyage to North America. It is indeed probable that Sebastian Cabot himself had some interest in several of these ventures; but it was in Spain

rather than in England that he now discerned larger opportunities for his skill and energy, and he left England, therefore, to become Pilot-Major, map-maker and general maritime adviser to the Spanish Emperor at a large salary. Here he seems to have planned out many of the most successful of the earlier Spanish voyages to America. But, perhaps on account of the growing rivalry between the Spanish and English seamen-traders and of his own English relationships, his position in Spain became a somewhat difficult one. He was presently compelled, therefore, although the Spanish supremacy in the waters of the New World was in no small degree due to his skill and experience, to return to England in 1516 owing to the jealousies that surrounded him in Spain.

He found Henry VIII on the throne, a far more generous monarch than his predecessor; and in 1517 he was once more in charge, with one Sir Thomas Spert, of an English expedition. This voyage, which was organized under the direct patronage of the King, had the object, as Hakluyt tells us, of "going in the back side of the new-found land," in order to reach "the back side and south seas of the Indies Occidental" and so home through the Straits of Magellan. Unfortunately, however, this venture also was a commercial failure, largely, as it was alleged, owing to a lack of courage on the part of Sir Thomas Spert—but it resulted in the discovery of the Davis

and Hudson Straits, and opened up a further knowledge of the coast of Labrador.

Shortly after his home-coming from this expedition, Sebastian Cabot again left England, and, after a visit to Spain, went to Venice, where he used all his arts in attempting to persuade the Venetian Government to employ him in American discovery. In this also he was unsuccessful, and he once more returned to Spain, where he at last succeeded in organizing another expedition, destined to spend five years in the exploration of the La Plata river and its surroundings in South America; and it was while he was in Seville, for this purpose, that he met Robert Thorne, the younger, also a member of a great Bristol family.

The history of mercantile England, especially in respect of its oversea trading connexions, may be regarded, in the main, as the history of numerous able and enterprising merchant families, in whose abilities it is impossible to deny the evidence of a strong hereditary factor. We have already seen this in the case of the Canynges, and to a lesser degree in that of the Cabots; and it is even more marked in the case of the Thornes, of whom this member, Robert Thorne, the younger, was perhaps the most celebrated.

Of Norman stock, the original forbears of the various branches of this remarkable clan fought at the Battle of Hastings on the side of William the Conqueror, and seem to have taken very readily to their new surroundings. Thus they rapidly be-

came established in various parts of England, in the west as well as in the home counties, and as far north as Lancashire. Sundry members of the family fought in the Crusades, while others were identified prominently with England's oversea trade. We learn, for instance, that one of them, belonging to the Society of English Merchants at Florence, received special privileges in the year 1249 from Pope Innocent III, and was prosperous enough in the year 1257 to lend money to Pope Alexander IV.

One of the sturdiest off-shoots of this vigorous clan seems to have sprung from Robert Thorne of St. Albans, who, in the year 1417, was appointed, among other "discreet men," to investigate the prevailing poverty and suggest steps for reform. He had four famous grandsons, James, a clothier of Colchester; John, of Reading, the famous abbot at whose hospitable board Henry VIII is said, on one occasion, to have knighted a loin of beef—hence sirloin; William, also of Reading, a clothier; and Robert, a merchant of Bristol and the friend of Cabot.

He was a cloth merchant as well as a soap manufacturer, Bristol then being almost as celebrated for its soap as for its woollen goods; and he seems to have shared in the family fondness for oversea mercantile enterprise. Thus, for many years, he lived at Seville in Spain, where he received the honour of knighthood from King Ferdinand; and in the year 1510, with fourteen

colleagues, he was appointed to hold in commission the office of an Admiral of England in Bristol.

At this time his son, Robert the younger, was eighteen years old, and was soon to be largely identified, as his father had been, with the commerce of Seville; and it is in this connexion that we find him associated, a good many years later, with Sebastian Cabot's expedition to La Plata. Towards the expenses of this venture he contributed 1,400 ducats, "principally," as he said, "for that two English friends of mine which are somewhat learned in cosmography, should go in the same ships to bring me certain relation of the country and to be expert in the navigation of those seas." That was in the year 1526, when Robert Thorne was still a comparatively young man of thirty-four; and a further proof of his enterprise, his wide outlook, and his public-spirited interest in exploration, is to be seen in a letter that he wrote soon afterwards. This was in reply to the English Ambassador at the Court of Spain, who had asked him for details of Cabot's new expedition.

"It appeareth plainly," he wrote, "that the new-found-land that we discovered is all a main land with the Indies Occidental from whence the Emperor hath all the gold and pearls." Following this he again pressed the importance to England of discovering the North-West Passage to Cathay. "God knoweth," he said, "that though by it I should have no great interest, yet

I have had and still have no little mind of this businesse. So that if I had facultie to my will, it should be the first thing that I woulde understand, even to attempt, if our Seas Northward be navigable to the pole or not. I reason that, as some sickenesses are hereditarious and coming from the father to the son, so this inclination or desire of this discovery I inherited from my father."

The next year, his father being now dead, he returned to England and finally persuaded Henry VIII to embark upon this adventure. Accordingly, on June 10, 1527, there set out from Plymouth the *Mary of Guildford* and the *Sampson*, to find the North-West Passage to Cathay. Unhappily disaster overtook the *Sampson*, which foundered in a storm on July 1, and the *Mary of Guildford* soon found herself in a network of icebergs. She turned south, therefore, and came upon "a great fresh river going up far into the main land"—possibly the St. Lawrence—and, having explored this, turned back to Newfoundland and so home.

This experience seems to have contented Henry VIII, and during the rest of his reign there were no further expeditions to discover this North-West Passage that loomed so large in the imagination of the navigators of that time. Nor does Robert Thorne seem to have pressed the point, though his exordium to the King remained on record; and for the last six years of his life he was content to continue adding to an already very

considerable fortune. This he disposed of with the greatest generosity, forgiving many of the debts of those less fortunate than himself; and, besides rebuilding Walthamstow Church and endowing a scholarship at the Merchant Taylors' School, he left a bequest for the purchase of land on which a Grammar School for Bristol was to be built. He was only forty when he died, but his life had been a full one, courageous, shrewd and broad-visioned. With the later years of Sebastian Cabot, who survived into and played a great part in the brilliant age to follow, we shall deal in a later chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PIONEERS OF FOREIGN TRADE

The North-East Passage to Cathay—Sir Hugh Willoughby and his Death—Richard Chancellor in Russia—The Formation of the Russia Company—Commercial Travelling in the Sixteenth Century—Anthony Jenkinson's Journey to Bokhara—An Epic of Pioneering.

LESS parsimonious than his father had been, Henry VIII, as we have already seen, was inclined to regard with considerable caution the overseas adventures of his merchant subjects—at any rate in so far as these were directed towards the New World. It is quite clear, however, that he had a full appreciation both of the necessity for building up and consolidating the foreign trade of England and for establishing its marine power upon firm and satisfactory lines. With regard to the first, his reign witnessed a very solid expansion of English trade in almost all directions. Thus we have records of English merchants from such towns as London, Bristol, Leicester, Plymouth, Hull, Boston and Exeter journeying to almost every part of Europe and, in spite of many hardships, pursuing and consolidating a prosperous trade. Wool, tin, wheat, hides, leather and cheese were amongst the many articles which this country then exported, while the principal

imports were such articles of luxury as manufactured silks, jewellery and wine.

With regard to shipping, Henry VIII emerges as one of the most industrious and far-seeing of English monarchs. It was in his reign that the real beginnings of the Royal Navy, in the modern sense of the word, were made; and indeed every kind of shipbuilding prospered during this period. Thus naval yards and store-houses at Deptford and Woolwich were created, and such harbours as those at Plymouth, Dartmouth, Teignmouth, Falmouth and Fowey were repaired and deepened. The Trinity House at Deptford was incorporated and given authority to examine licences and regulate pilots, to provide lighthouses and beacons, to supervise the construction and formation of harbours, and generally to hold in good keeping the safety of English ships, marine stores, and sailors. This was the corporation of "godly disposed men who, for the actual suppression of evil disposed persons bringing ships to destruction by the showing forth of false beacons, do bind themselves together for the love of our Lord Christ, in the name of the Masters and Fellows of the Trinity Guild, to succour from the dangers of the sea all who are beset upon the coasts of England, to feed men when a-hungered, to bind up their wounds, and to build and light proper beacons for the guidance of mariners."

It was in this reign, therefore, that those reserves of maritime energy, which were to exercise

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so tremendous and world-wide an influence in the greater days of Queen Elizabeth, were being prepared and cherished; and in the enterprises, such as we have recorded, of the Cabots and the Thornes we may trace the earlier heralds of the great impulse towards world discovery that was to follow. These men and their colleagues must be regarded as the single spies, as it were, before the lusty troops of English seamen who were to ring the world and penetrate every sea during the ensuing fifty years; and, before Thorne had died, one of his contemporaries, Captain William Hawkins, of Plymouth, had already made the first three voyages to Brazil to be achieved by an Englishman.

He was the son of one Master John Hawkins of Tavistock in Devonshire, himself in his day a famous merchant shipowner, and, as we shall presently see, he was to be followed by a son destined to be far greater than either. Meanwhile let us turn for a moment for a last glance at the closing activities of the indefatigable Sebastian Cabot. As a "good olde gentleman," still ready to join in a dance, we find him, in the reign of Edward VI, as the Governor of yet another "Companie of Marchant Adventurers to Regions, Dominions, Islands and places unknowen," and sufficiently prosperous to be able to give largesse to the crews of his new ships.

As we have seen, in discussing Robert Thorne of Bristol, it was still the far-famed Cathay that held the imagination of the earlier Tudor mer-

chants and seamen, in spite of the proven riches of the Americas, and, when Robert Thorne's expedition to find the North-West Passage failed, the thoughts of the English mariners turned towards the possibility of a North-East Passage to the same destination. The first great effort, therefore, of Sebastian Cabot's new company was to fit out an expedition to round the coast of Norway for this purpose; and, after much consideration, the command was entrusted to Sir Hugh Willoughby, with Richard Chancellor as his second. In its main object this enterprise failed, but in its total results it was of profound importance, and its record is scarcely to be surpassed by any in our maritime history.

Three ships were fitted out, the *Bona Esperanza* of 120 tons, under the command of Sir Hugh Willoughby himself, the *Edward Bonaventure* of 160 tons, under the command of Richard Chancellor, and the *Bona Confidentia* of 90 tons, under the command of Cornelius Durfoorth; and, on May 11, 1553, in the presence of King Edward VI, they passed Greenwich on their way down the river, with the harbours of Cathay shining before them.

Owing to contrary winds it was not until the end of the month that they came abreast of Yarmouth, three leagues out, and by the first of June they were back again in the Orwell, where they had to remain off and on for another three weeks. On June 27 they really got away from England,

but they did not reach Heligoland until July 14, making the Lofoden Islands about the end of the same month.

In the event of the three little cockle-shells, for that is what they amounted to, being separated by a storm, it had been arranged by Sir Hugh Willoughby that they should make for Wardhouse, then a well-known port on the northern coast of Europe at the mouth of what is now the Varanger Fiord in Lapland. Soon after leaving the Lofoden Islands rough weather was encountered, and the *Bona Esperanza* and the *Bona Confidentia* tried to make this port, having lost sight of the *Edward Bonaventure* with Richard Chancellor on board her. For many days they struggled up and down the coast, until indeed the end of September, and were finally frozen in off the coast of Lapland, where Sir Hugh Willoughby and all the members of the crews of both vessels ultimately perished from cold and hunger.

Meanwhile Richard Chancellor, in the *Bonaventure*, had been more successful than his comrades, and had succeeded in making Wardhouse, where he waited for his leader and the other two vessels. After remaining there a week he resolved to proceed alone, in spite of the earnest warnings of some Scotsmen whom he met, and from Hakluyt's chronicle of his voyage we can learn something of the spirit both of Chancellor himself and his crew.

"And for them," he says, "which were with

Master Chanceler in his shippe, although they had great cause of discomfort by the losse of their companie, and were not a little troubled with cogitations and perturbations of minde, in respect of their doubtfull course; yet notwithstanding they were of such consent and agreement of minde with Master Chanceler, that they were resolute and prepared under his direction and government, to make proofe and triall of all adventures, without all feare or mistrust of future dangers. Which constancie of minde in all the companie did exceedingly increase their Captaine's carefulness; for hee being swallowed up with right good will and love towards them feared lest through any errour of his the safetie of the companie should bee indangered."

In such conditions, then, Chancellor set sail, discovering himself in the region of the midnight sun, and finally opened up the White Sea, and came to anchor, the first Englishman in history, near what is now known as the port of Archangel. Here, so the same old chronicler tells us, "the fishermen being amazed with the strange greatnesse of his shippe (for in those partes before that time they had never seene the like) beganne presently to avoyde and to flee, but hee (according to his great and singular courtesie) looked pleasantly upon them, comforting them by signes and gestures, refusing those dueties and reverences of theirs and taking them up in all loving sort from the ground. And it is strange to consider

howe much favour afterwards in that place, this humanitie of his did purchase to himselfe. For they being dismissed spread by and by a report abroad of the arrivall of a strange nation of a singular gentlenesse and courtesie."

By his tact and good will he thus very quickly made friends with the inhabitants, learning many things about the country. He decided at last to make the overland journey of 1,500 miles to visit the Emperor of Moscow. Leaving some of his men behind to guard his vessel and her wares, he started off on sleds with some chosen comrades, successfully reached Moscow, and was most graciously received by the Emperor, John Vasilivich. Moscow was then a town, so Chancellor has told us, greater than London and its suburbs, but "very rude and standing without all order." It was a great commercial centre, however. "You shall meete in a morning," wrote Chancellor, "seven or eight hundred sleds coming or going thither that carrie corne and some carrie fish. You shall have some that carrie corne to the Mosco and some that fetch corne from thence, that at the least dwell a thousand miles off; and all their carriage is on sleds. Those which come so farre dwell in the North partes of the Dukes dominions, where the cold will suffer no corne to grow, it is so extreme. They bring thither fishes, furres, and beastes skinnes. In those partes they have but small store of cattell."

He stayed in Moscow for some months, and

then travelled north again to rejoin his men and embark in the little *Edward Bonaventure*, in which he safely reached England again in the year 1554. The very important result of this journey was the founding of the earliest of the great English chartered companies, the Russia Company, with old Sebastian Cabot as its governor, and the coming to England of the first Russian Ambassador some eighteen months later.

Sebastian Cabot was now drawing near to the end of his great, if chequered, career. Associated with him in this new enterprise were many of the most prominent of London's merchants, not the least of whom was Sir John Gresham, whose family name is still commemorated in the street running parallel to Cheapside. Stalwart as these merchants were, however, and demanding, as they did, a high standard both from each other and their assistants, they may well have been proud of the courage and wisdom of their various pioneer agents and captains. Thus one of these, Steven Burrough, master of the pinnesse *Searchthrift*, reached Nova Zembla in 1556 and spent many weeks among the Samoyedes of the Tundra. But perhaps the most remarkable journey of this period —and indeed one of the most remarkable journeys performed by any Englishman in any period—was that of another commercial agent of the Russia Company, Master Anthony Jenkinson, who, in the year 1558, set off from Moscow to travel to Bokhara in Turkestan.

Leaving the Russian capital on April 23, with letters from the Emperor to such rulers as he might encounter, the journey of this quite ordinary English merchant on his Company's business was destined to become an epic. Travelling by boat, he and his two companions, Richard and Robert Johnson, with a Tartar Tolmach, arrived without adventure and with their "divers parcels" at Nijni Novgorod on May 11. Here, having noted that between Rezan and Nijni Novgorod was raised "the greatest store of waxe and honey in all the land of Russia," they stayed a week in order to join the party of a Russian officer.

This man, who had been appointed Governor of Astrachan, had with him 500 boats, and the whole fleet now dropped down the river Volga on its long voyage to the Caspian Sea. In ten days' time they came to Kazan, captured from the Tartars nine years before, and in this "faire town," as Jenkinson described it, they remained till June.

They were now passing through a wild country, inhabited by Gentiles and Mohammedans, as Jenkinson put it in his report, and only arrived at Astrachan after another month of travel. They found the country ravaged both by plague and famine, and Jenkinson, had he so desired, could, he remarked, have bought as many goodly Tartar children as he wanted at the price of a sixpenny loaf apiece.

Here they remained until August 6, although

the Astrachan trade was then very small, eventually setting out across the Caspian Sea on August 10. So far the journey had been without any great peril, but, a few days later, Jenkinson had a narrow escape. His little ship was lying against the shore of the Caspian Sea and off the territory of a Tartar prince, supposed to be friendly; all his men were on land, and he being, as he tells us, "sore sicke," was alone on board with five Tartars. Fortunately one of these was a holy man, having made the pilgrimage to Mecca, for presently a boat approached containing some thirty Tartar warriors, and these began to go aboard demanding of the Tartars if there were any Russians or Greeks in the vessel. The holy man then made a prayer and declared with great oaths that there were none, and succeeded in so impressing the would-be brigands with his honesty and worth that he succeeded in saving the lives of Jenkinson and all his companions as well as their goods.

That was on August 19, and on the 27th they nearly perished in a storm, finally landing, not at the port from whence they had intended starting their long overland journey, but at a place of "brute field people, where never barke nor boate had before arrived." Here, however, Jenkinson sent messages to the local Governor by whom he was courteously entertained, and from whom, after considerable bargaining, he succeeded in obtaining the necessary camels for his further progress. He

was now striking east towards Bokhara, and five days later the party was held up by a band of Tartars, who opened their wares in the name of their Prince, and took such things as they thought best. This so annoyed the courageous spirit of Master Anthony Jenkinson that he himself saddled a horse and rode off to see the Prince, to request that he might be given a protecting passport while travelling through his country. This he obtained, and the Prince, impressed by the attitude of the sturdy English merchant-seaman, entertained him very hospitably with "flesh and mares milke," although, as Jenkinson afterwards learned, his original orders had been that the Englishman was to be robbed and destroyed.

After this further escape, came twenty days in the wilderness, during which Jenkinson and his companions found no fresh water, and it was not until October 4 that Jenkinson arrived at Sellizure and succeeded in ingratiating himself with its ruler, Azim Khan. From him he obtained letters of safe conduct and set out again on October 14, arriving two days later at the city of Urgence, where he stayed for a month. Safe conducts, however, would have been of but little use had not Jenkinson himself been the man that he was; and on December 15, between Urgence and Bokhara, he found himself again surrounded and assailed by an armed band of robbers.

"They willed us," says Jenkinson, "to yielde ourselves, or els to be slaine, but wee defied them,

wherewith they shotte at us all at once; and wee at them very hotly." Had it not been, indeed, for "four hand-gunnes," Jenkinson and his comrades would have fared very badly. Such was commercial travelling in the year 1558 as this stout-hearted agent found it. However, he reached Bokhara at last in safety on December 23, just eight months after he had left Moscow.

Here he was received by the Emperor and treated, on the whole, very well, though the monarch presently departed for the wars, owing Master Jenkinson some money, for which, in the end, he had to be satisfied with goods. Commercially this expedition was not very successful, but Jenkinson obtained much valuable information as to the character of the trade carried on at Bokhara and its possibilities as an English market. He stayed at Bokhara until the month of March, 1599, and only left, as it happened, just in time, since, ten days later, the armies of Samarcand were laying siege to the town. His return journey was, happily for him, a comparatively uneventful one, and he arrived in Moscow in September, where he presented the Tsar with a "white coues taile of Cathay and a drumme of Tartaria which he well accepted."

So ended a journey of which every man of Anthony Jenkinson's blood may well be proud, and the prouder because it was but typical of many such performed by his contemporaries. Facing the unknown in the pursuit of their various

mercantile callings, forsaking the modest comforts of their homes above or behind their city shops, it was upon the courage, shrewdness and commercial ability of these almost anonymous and forgotten tradesmen and seamen that the England of to-day, and indeed the whole Anglo-Saxon comity of nations, was securely founded.

CHAPTER V

THE OPENING OF THE GOLDEN AGE

Queen Elizabeth's Accession and her Influence—The Early Adventures of John Hawkins—The African Slave Trade to the New World—His Proscription by the Spanish Government—The Fight at St. Juan de Ulloa —John Hawkins as a Diplomatist—His Commercial Enterprises and Work for the Navy—The Last Tragic Voyage.

WHILE Master Anthony Jenkinson was on his way to Bokhara on behalf of the Russia Company in the year 1558, the troubled reign of Queen Mary came to an end and Elizabeth ascended the English throne. A few months earlier Calais had been lost—the last fragment of English territory on the continent of Europe—and though at the time that had seemed a bitter blow, it was to prove in the end a blessing. Henceforward the people of England, released from European entanglements and the hypnotic dreams of a European empire that had for so long dazzled the minds of their leaders, found themselves free and with a new and far greater world opening before them beyond the Atlantic. From this time onward, therefore, their eyes turned westward, and the old sea spirit, never, as we have seen, entirely dormant, burst into a flame that devoured the English imagination.

Restored by the careful management of Henry

VII, fostered by the conservative enterprise of Henry VIII, the little island set in the silver sea was destined under Elizabeth to attain the status of a world power. Finding in Shakespeare and his brilliant fellow-artists a new and triumphant literary expression, it was also to receive a fresh expansion at the hands of its seamen—the sons and grandsons and spiritual inheritors of those older merchant adventurers with whom we have already travelled.

Among the first of these was John Hawkins, the grandson, as we have seen, of John Hawkins of Tavistock, and the son of Master William Hawkins, who, in the year 1530, had made his first voyage to Brazil. The boy John was then about ten years old, but it was not long before he was himself at sea and, as a careful and ambitious young merchant, was soon making voyages on his own account. Most of these appear to have been to the Canary Islands, where, "by his good and upright dealing with the people," he won honour for himself and success for his trade, besides acquiring much valuable knowledge. From these islanders and the sailors that put in at their ports he learnt not only that there was a great demand for negroes in the sugar plantations in America, but that negroes were to be obtained on the East Coast of Africa. Here then was an opportunity for commerce and one that, in those days, had no immoral significance. To Hawkins and his contemporaries a negro was but little removed from

a useful domestic animal. Nor was this to be wondered at when, so long as two hundred years later, we find the captain of a Liverpool slave ship insisting on, and himself personally conducting, public worship twice every Sunday, and seeing no incongruity between this and the traffic in which he was engaged!

In the autumn of 1562, therefore, John Hawkins, with three small vessels, sailed from England for Sierra Leone, where he loaded up with negroes, whom he then carried to Hispaniola, as the Spaniards had called their new territory across the Atlantic. So successful was he that he was obliged while over there to charter two additional vessels in which to bring back with him all the pearls, hides and sugar that he obtained in exchange. He was away a year, and in the following autumn again set sail to repeat the process, this time with five vessels, including the *Jesus of Lubeck*, of 700 tons, one of the largest vessels then afloat. The number of the men under his command was about two hundred. In view of the nature of their mission it is a little piquant to recall that among the rules drawn up by John Hawkins for the guidance of his crews were the following: "Serve God daily; love one another; preserve your victuals; beware of fire; and seek good company."

From England he sailed to Cape Verde, where, we are told, he found the natives very "gentle and loving." An attempt, however, to seize them

for purposes of slavery failed, and John Hawkins accordingly sailed southward, visiting various ports on the East Coast of Africa until he had obtained as many slaves as his vessels could carry. He then proceeded across the Atlantic to the West Indies, but at first failed to find a market for his living goods. Accordingly at Barbarata, Captain Hawkins resolved upon stronger measures. He landed a hundred of his men, well armed with arquebuses, pikes and bows and arrows, and compelled the Spanish inhabitants to buy his negroes at his own price. From there he went to Curaçoa, and thence to the mainland of South America, intending to exchange a further batch of negroes for hides and sugar at Rio de la Hacha.

Here, once more, since at first the citizens of Rio de la Hacha only offered him about half the sum for his negroes that he demanded, he threatened to land next morning and give them a "breakfast" of arrows and javelins. The result was that his own terms were agreed to, and, apparently finding these methods successful, he pursued them with characteristic, if indefensible resolution, at various other ports. He returned on September 20, 1565, to the little town of Padstow on the north coast of Cornwall, "with the loss of about twenty persons in all the voyage and with great profit to the venturer as also to the whole realm, in bringing home both gold, silver, pearls and other jewels in great store." Despite his methods, he found himself in great favour with

the Queen and her surrounding courtiers, as well as with the nation at large, and, "by way of increase and augmentation of honour, a coat of arms and crest were settled upon him and his posterity."

By now, however, his fame had reached the Court of Spain, to the perturbation of Philip IV, both on account of the trade which Hawkins was doing and the fact that he was a Protestant heretic. Orders were accordingly sent out to the Spanish governors in America that they were to have nothing to do with him, although the two countries, England and Spain, were nominally at peace. Whether or not Hawkins knew of these orders is perhaps doubtful. He may very probably have suspected some such sequel. But his next expedition was arranged on far more elaborate lines. This time he sailed from Plymouth with no less than six vessels and 1,500 men, one of his ships, the *Judith*, being under the command of a distant relative of his, one Francis Drake, a shrewd and valiant young merchant seaman then twenty-seven years old. They obtained their slaves successfully and, in spite of the Spanish Government's orders, were able to dispose of them at great profit. The slaves were badly needed, and the Spanish merchants were not improbably willing to yield without much difficulty to Hawkins' show of force.

Nor does Hawkins appear to have hesitated to make use of somewhat stringent tactics. At Rio de la Hacha, for instance, he landed and took

possession of the town, and, though the town of Cartagena proved too strong for him, he succeeded in amassing much treasure of precious stones and metals. In the neighbourhood of Cuba, however, his luck changed, and he fell in with a hurricane that considerably damaged his vessel. The *Jesus of Lubeck* lost her rudder and was found to be leaking badly, while none of the others escaped intact. He was therefore obliged to put into San Juan de Ulloa, a little port at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, where, on the day after his arrival, there appeared on the horizon, as ill-fortune would have it, the fleet of the very Spanish Admiral who had been sent out to look for him.

This placed Hawkins in a dilemma. Weaker in men and vessels though he was, he could yet hold the entrance of the harbour, and by so doing, owing to the bad weather, place the vessels of the Spanish Admiral in a dangerous position. But the two countries were still, as we have said, nominally at peace; and accordingly he deemed it wiser to make a treaty. Under the terms of this he was to be allowed to repair his vessels in peace, on condition that he allowed the Spanish Admiral to sail into the harbour. Once in, however, the Spanish Admiral, realizing that this was the Captain John Hawkins with whom he had had such strict orders to deal, altered his mind and attacked the Englishmen with immensely superior forces. After a great fight, in which the Spanish

Admiral's flagship was sunk, the *Jesus of Lubeck* and two of the smaller vessels destroyed, and many stout lives lost, Hawkins himself, and the survivors from the lost ships, crowded on board the *Judith* and *Minion* and succeeded in escaping.

It soon became clear, however, that these two small vessels would be totally unable to carry the whole party back to England, and accordingly some hundred of the sailors volunteered to be put ashore. What their fate was to be we shall presently see, but the *Judith*, under Francis Drake, reached England in safety after a comparatively uneventful voyage. Hawkins in the *Minion* had much worse luck. Sickness broke out on board, and he lost so many men that he was left with scarcely enough to man the vessel. He was therefore obliged, with the terror of the then active Inquisition in front of him, to put into a Spanish port. Happily for him, just outside the harbour, he found some other English vessels, with whose aid he was able to re-fit; and he landed at last at Plymouth, a month after Drake, to find himself a national hero, with his name on everybody's lips.

All the burning spirits, not only of Devonshire, but of the whole of maritime England, were longing to serve under him, and there was the deepest anxiety to rescue or avenge those gallant volunteers who had remained behind. What this was to involve, even Hawkins could not have foreseen, but it was temporarily to transfer him, as we shall

see, out of the region of merchant seafaring into the far more subtle and difficult world of international diplomacy. How considerable a change this was can best be realized by once more recalling that, although, thanks to the part he played in what was already becoming a notable conflict with Spain, it is rather as an admiral and naval tactician that Hawkins is now popularly received, he never in reality ceased to be first, last, and fundamentally, a prosperous merchant seaman.

With his elder brother William, he owned at one time a private merchant fleet of thirty-one vessels, and these traded more or less continuously with all the chief European ports. But, as Froude has reminded us, there existed between all these seamen—masters and men—a very close bond; and the fate of the hundred men that, as has been stated, Hawkins had been obliged to leave behind him in the New World, was constantly before him and cast a deep shadow over his own personal success. Some of these unfortunate men had, as a matter of fact, afterwards fallen into the hands of the holy Inquisition, by which they had been imprisoned, tortured, and slain for their Protestant faith, in various Spanish prisons on both sides of the Atlantic. The burning desire, therefore, to rescue the survivors, if there should be any, and to exact expiation for the others now became the consuming passion of this fearless and fierce-hearted merchant shipowner.

Probably, in the person of his monarch, Queen Elizabeth, he had at bottom an entirely sympathetic mistress. But the Queen, a very shrewd and practised diplomat, had for her country's sake to move with the extremest caution. Let us compare for a moment her relative position with that of Philip IV of Spain, her potential opponent. In spite of the fast-growing prowess of the English seamen, and the commercial acumen of her merchant subjects, Elizabeth's actual territory consisted of but one little group of islands. The total number of her subjects was about half that of London and its suburbs to-day, and the whole of the nation's yearly revenue amounted to a sum that was less than one-tenth of that of its formidable opponent. On the other hand, Spain was then one of the greatest Empires that the world had ever known. It held dominion over Portugal, most of the Netherlands, and nearly the whole of Italy; it claimed the sovereignty in Africa, of Tunis, Oran, Cape Verde and the Canary Islands; and in America of Chili, Mexico, Peru and Cuba. Small wonder, then, that Elizabeth had to feel her way with the utmost care. Unofficially she might do all in her power, as indeed she probably did, to assist Hawkins and his numerous and enterprising colleagues. Officially she deemed it imperative to preserve a complete ignorance of many of their more violent doings.

Hawkins, therefore, determined to take matters into his own hands, and to use diplomacy as his

weapon. In those ardent spirits who had flocked to his hand, and the ships that they so daringly handled, he had a valuable weapon, and he knew it. Accordingly, laying his plans with great guile, he persuaded the Spanish Ambassador that both he and his men were discontented with Elizabeth's lack of encouragement, and would therefore be glad to offer their services to the ruler of Spain, in exchange for the release of such English sailors as were still held in Spanish prisons. Nothing, perhaps, in the whole history of diplomatic intrigue is more astonishing than the complete success with which this rough and resolute and hard-bitten old merchant-adventurer —for he was then over fifty—hoodwinked the world's greatest potentate and the subtle diplomatists numbered in his entourage. Not only was Hawkins successful in obtaining the release of all his sailor comrades, but he received for himself a free pardon from Philip IV for his own high-handed conduct in the waters of the New World, and a large sum of money in order to procure further English adherents to Spanish interests.

"I have sent," he wrote to Sir William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's staunch and far-sighted adviser, "your lordship the copy of my pardon from the King of Spain in the very order and manner I had it. The Duke of Medina and the Duke of Alva hath either of them one of the same pardons, more amplified, to present unto me, that this be large enough with my great titles and honours

from the King—from which God deliver me. Their practices be very mischievous and they be never idle, but God, I hope, will confound them and turn their devices upon their own necks. I will put my business in some order and give attendance under Her Majesty, to do her that service that by your lordship shall be thought most convenient in this case."

Thus wrote Hawkins, and it is easy to imagine the grim smile with which he penned these words. He had gained, by daring and guile, not only the object that he had so passionately set his heart upon, but he had succeeded in becoming privy to a plot then on foot, and of which Elizabeth and her minister Cecil had then only a vague suspicion, whereby, with Spanish assistance, Elizabeth was to be deposed and the Catholic Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, placed in her stead upon the English throne.

On his return from Spain, therefore, Hawkins found himself a figure of state, and in the year 1572 he was appointed Treasurer to the Navy, effecting many most valuable reforms. He was also actively interested in most of those overseas enterprises with which the whole of maritime England was now bubbling over. With Humphrey Gilbert he was a Member of Parliament for Plymouth, and with his younger relative, Francis Drake, he founded a fund at Chatham, consisting of voluntary contributions from the more prosperous merchant seamen, to be

applied, as required, on behalf of their less fortunate comrades. He also insisted upon the utmost honesty on the part of individual ship captains, holding them responsible for the accuracy of their bills of lading and any proved deficit in their accounts. Nor was he less strenuous and exacting in his dealings with the Navy; and, foreseeing the crisis now inevitably developing in the relations between Spain and England, he employed the whole of his great experience and prestige in strengthening the Navy. It was fortunate for England that he did so, and that by his example and under his skilled command so many of his younger contemporaries had fitted themselves for the ordeal to come.

This is not the place with which to deal with the epic fight in which the defeat of the great Armada rang the knell of Spain, but it may be added that most of the ships were merchantmen, private vessels. In this, one of the world's most critical actions, Hawkins bore his full share, with the rank of rear-admiral; and, when it was over, he did not hesitate to incur a good deal of obloquy for his insistence upon the full payment of every man that had taken part in it. In spite of the victory the country was then almost financially destitute, but Hawkins was inflexible, and, as usual, got his way in the long run. To the end, however, his career was destined to be stormy, and his hatred of Spain only grew with advancing years. He was now a knight; he had

all the money he wanted; but the salt of the sea was in his blood, and Spain was still a great Power —far too great for his liking. Accordingly, in May, 1590, when well over sixty, we find him at sea once again, in command, with Frobisher, of fourteen ships designed to harass the Spanish coast. Only one prize, a rich East Indiaman, fell to this particular expedition; but in subsequent years he and his agents were destined to obtain many more.

Other members of his family, of the new generation, were now also growing into manhood and following the sea, and it was the capture by the Spaniards of his son Richard that led, in the end, to the old man's death. In the false hope of possibly being able to rescue his son and inflict yet another blow on his lifelong enemies, he set sail, with Sir Francis Drake, in 1595, with twenty-seven vessels and 2,500 men. Unhappily by this time his temper, never of the sweetest, had become on occasion almost unmanageable, and the wills of the two men, both of the strongest, soon came into conflict. Quarrels between them were frequent, and it was after an especially violent one—or so it was currently supposed—that Hawkins, then seventy years of age, became so seriously ill that he ultimately died on board ship off the island of Porto Rico on November 21, 1591, to be followed, less than three months later, by his even more illustrious relative, Sir Francis Drake.

If it was not the death, it was at any rate the

setting that he would most probably have chosen; and in him there passed away not only a remarkable figure of his peculiar age, but one of the greatest servants of his country of which English history holds any record. Utterly without fear, he was one of those strange compounds of idealist, individualist and man of business that the cause of human liberty has always been able to enlist from among the ranks of Anglo-Saxon seamen.

CHAPTER VI

THE ELIZABETHAN RENAISSANCE

Francis Drake as a Young Merchant Captain—His Discovery of the Pacific—The Voyage Round the World—Sons of Devon—His Part in the Armada—His Death at Sea—Early Days of Raleigh—His Efforts at Colonization—Pioneer Work in Virginia—His Troubles at Court and Banishment—Explorations in Guiana—His Last Voyage and Failure.

WE have already seen Drake as a young kinsman of Hawkins sailing to the New World in the *Judith*, the first vessel to return from that ill-fated expedition. Like Hawkins' own grandfather, Francis Drake was born at Tavistock, in Devon, and was the eldest of twelve children of a poor country parson. Early in life he had been apprenticed to a local merchant shipowner, and had made many voyages along the coast and to France and Flanders before joining Hawkins. Popularly regarded, as he has always been, as a fighting man, an admiral, and the circumnavigator of the world, he was primarily and in reality a sea-going merchant in as full a sense as was Hawkins; and he must be conceived, therefore, on his return from America at the age of twenty-nine, as a steady-going, determined young commercial sea-captain upon whose horizon there had suddenly dawned the dazzling possibilities of the

New World. He was suffering, both as a merchant, from the financial reverse that he and Hawkins had sustained at St. Juan de Ulloa, and as a man, from the loss of so many trusty comrades, in that disastrous action. To the glamour of the West, therefore, there was added a bitter hatred of Spain, and he soon began to make preparations for a further expedition. On this occasion he resolved to have no rival and to travel as light as possible; he found no difficulty in persuading his friends to invest the necessary capital. In the autumn of 1572 he accordingly set sail in a little vessel, the *Dragon*, of only seventy tons, accompanied by a yet smaller vessel, the *Swan*, and with no more than a year's provisions and seventy-three men and boys. As he neared Nombre de Dios, in the Gulf of Mexico, he fell in with another small English vessel. A party landed near the town, into which Drake, in disguise, went to make discreet inquiries. Here he heard that a big train of mules was due with Peruvian treasure that had been shipped up the west coast of South America, and was thence being transferred in this way, across the isthmus, for re-shipment upon the Atlantic.

This convoy he resolved to ambush, and successfully did so, burying a large amount of the silver, but loading up his vessels with gold and precious stones until they could hold no more. With this wealth he reached Plymouth again in safety, to the great satisfaction of his

fellow merchant-adventurers; but he had also brought back with him something that was destined to be far more important. While waiting for the mule train he had climbed some high ground, and from thence there had burst upon his vision the broad expanse of the Pacific Ocean, into which no Englishman had yet sailed. The gate to it lay through those far southern and stormy seas beyond Cape Horn, first navigated by Magellan not so long before; and to take his own vessel through them and into this new ocean thenceforward dominated every other interest in Drake's mind.

It was not for five years, however, owing to the extreme caution of Queen Elizabeth, that he was able to make a start; and when he did so, in the year 1577, it was with no more than five vessels, of which the largest, the *Pelican*, was of only 120 tons! On May 20, 1578, he reached the Straits of Magellan, and here he beached his vessels for repairs and reorganized the arrangements of his expedition. He decided to reduce the number of his vessels to three, the others being considered too small and too unseaworthy for further work; and he then set sail again in August, with the *Pelican* (later on to be re-christened the *Golden Hind*), the *Elizabeth*, and the *Marigold*. In spite of these new arrangements, however, he was destined to meet with disaster on his first entrance into the Pacific, for in a fierce storm the *Marigold* was lost and the

Elizabeth driven out of sight. Compelled to put back again into the Straits, she waited for three weeks for news of Drake, and then, reluctantly assuming him to have perished also, her captain made his way back again to England.

But Drake had weathered the storm, and, making the port of Valparaiso, found there a Spanish galleon laden with treasure. So astounded were those on board at finding an English vessel alongside that Drake succeeded in making himself master of her within a few minutes and of the whole town of Valparaiso very shortly afterwards. In sheer panic, indeed, the inhabitants had almost unanimously fled in the face of this handful of English sailors.

Already now the voyage, from the commercial standpoint, had achieved a triumph beyond every expectation; and, with a hundred thousand pounds' worth of treasure, Drake took his little vessel up the coast to Lima, in Peru. Here he learned that yet another great Spanish galleon, the *Cacafuega*, had sailed for Europe only two days earlier; and, cramming on all sail, the *Golden Hind* made haste to overtake her. This she succeeded in doing. The Spanish captain was utterly taken by surprise, and Drake was quickly master of the *Cacafuega* and her vast store of treasure.

But the alarm had now been given. Three Spanish vessels from Lima were already in hot pursuit of him, and there was little doubt in his

mind but that others would be lying in wait for him in the Straits of Magellan. Faced with this problem, he thereupon decided—and it was, perhaps, one of the most daring as it was certainly one of the most critical decisions ever made by an English merchant-captain—to return home, not by the eastern, but by the western route, a journey of some twenty thousand miles round the coasts of India and South Africa. In those uncharted seas, and considering the tonnage and load of the little *Golden Hind*, the daring of this breath-taking decision has not often been paralleled. It amounted, in fact, to a circumnavigation of the world; but Drake's good star was aloft, and he carried his enterprise through successfully.

Nearly three years after he had sailed and long after he had been given up for lost, he reappeared before Plymouth on September 25, in the year 1580, safe and sound, and with nearly three million pounds' worth of treasure weighing down his vessel. He was knighted by Elizabeth, and when the Spanish Ambassador protested against his presence in the Pacific she replied that he was to tell his royal master that "a title to the ocean cannot belong to any people or private persons, for as much as neither nature nor public use and custom permitted any possession thereof."

From thence onwards it was less as the merchant than as the daring privateer and naval tactician that Drake was to play his dazzling part

in Elizabethan history. Unjustifiable as many of his actions were in the strictly legal sense of to-day, yet there was a consciousness in him, as in his comrades, that beneath all these superficial neutralities the lists were already set for an inevitable conflict, not only for the freedom of the seas, but of thought, religion and person also, and he no doubt reflected that in such a fight the weaker side must strike first or perish.

When the great Armada sailed from the ports of Spain, and the fate of the world hung in the balance as scarcely before in history, it was upon the prestige of Sir Francis Drake, perhaps more than upon that of any other single man, that the result was to hinge. Where so many shone, he was the brightest star, the man whose name was to go down in legend, the son of the country vicar, the merchant skipper, the navigator of the world, and the typical servant of individual freedom.

Such, then, was Drake, who, as we have seen, like his grim old relative, John Hawkins, must be regarded primarily as a typical merchant shipowner and oversea trader of his time.

From no study of English merchant seamen could the name of Sir Walter Raleigh be left out, since no man combined to so great an extent in his single person the various impulses that flowered so magically in the Elizabethan Renaissance.

Scholar, courtier, soldier, sailor, statesman, explorer, colonizer, trader, historian, Sir Walter

Raleigh in his thronged career excelled in all these capacities as did no other man. There were, it is true, greater navigators, wiser diplomats, profounder scholars, more inspired poets, shrewder men of commerce, but for sheer versatility Raleigh stood alone, and perhaps remains alone to this day. Two bequests of his to the common life of his country are now so universal that few stop to consider the man who was chiefly responsible for them. But to Walter Raleigh, more than to any other man, we owe the tobacco leaf and the potato.

It was also Walter Raleigh who was most prominently associated with the beginnings of that new movement of the race, then just starting, towards the formation overseas of definitely English colonies, and no record of the founders and foundations of Anglo-Saxon oversea commerce would be complete without, at least, an epitome of this great man's wonderful activities.

Like Drake and Hawkins and so many more of the Elizabethan seamen, he was a man of Devonshire, being born at the farm of Hayes, near Budleigh Salterton, in the year 1542. The old house still stands after the passage of centuries. At the age of sixteen he went to Oriel College, Oxford, in the same year that Master Anthony Jenkinson, as we saw in a previous chapter, was setting out from the heart of Russia upon his wonderful journey to Bokhara. Sebastian Cabot, then an old man, was still alive and active; John

Hawkins, as a young man, was trading with the Canary Islands, and perfecting himself in the Spanish tongue, that was later to stand both himself and his country in such good stead. Francis Drake, a couple of years Raleigh's senior, was already at sea learning his business. They were great days, and Raleigh's birth and circumstances almost inevitably threw him into the gay and boisterous heart of them. His mother had been the widow of Otho Gilbert, and the great Sir Humphrey Gilbert was his half-brother.

After leaving Oxford the army claimed him, and for five crowded years he fought abroad, both in France and the Netherlands, on the Protestant side. On returning home in 1578, when he was twenty-six years old, he found his half-brother, Sir Humphrey, about to sail, after innumerable difficulties, with the purpose of attempting to form a colony on the coast of North America.

Already impoverished by previous gallant but unsuccessful voyages, Sir Humphrey's new expedition did not sail under propitious circumstances. At the last moment some of his supporters fell away, and in the end he had to sail with but six instead of the arranged eleven ships. Of these, Raleigh was the captain of one, and a nephew of John Hawkins the skipper of another. The expedition succeeded in reaching Newfoundland, but was unable to effect anything in the way of colonization, and Gilbert returned

to England deeply despondent and poorer than ever.

For the next few years Raleigh served in Ireland, where the Spanish Government and Pope Gregory VIII were aiding the Irish people in fighting against Queen Elizabeth. But when Gilbert sailed again, in 1583, he took with him a vessel built by Raleigh and named after him. He was again very unlucky, being wrecked on the way home.

In the year 1584, however, Raleigh was heart and soul in the project of forming yet another colony, to be named Virginia, in honour of Elizabeth, the virgin Queen. Once again fortune failed to smile; but in the next year he organized a second fleet, and was successful on his way back in capturing a valuable Spanish prize worth £50,000.

Six years before this, Martin Frobisher had made his way round Labrador into what was afterwards to be called the Hudson Strait, leading into Hudson Bay; and in 1585 we find Walter Raleigh associated with a fellow-Devonian, John Davis, in pushing still farther round the north coast of America on the usual quest for a passage to Cathay. This resulted in the discovery of Greenland, and the passage between Greenland and Baffin Land, known as Davis Strait, and the naming of some high ground, in honour of Raleigh, as Mount Raleigh. In the same year Raleigh himself took another fleet to Virginia, and

yet a fourth in the year 1587, a few months before the sailing of the Armada.

By now he was a wealthy man, since Elizabeth had granted him a monopoly in the way of wine licences, as well as 12,000 acres of land in Ireland. But he spent money freely, and sank great sums in his successive Virginian enterprises. Soon after the defeat of the Armada, in which he played a notable part, he assigned all his rights in Virginia to a Company of Gentlemen and merchants of London, but, as the subsequent twenty years showed, the difficulties of successful colonization had been due to no incompetence on the part of Raleigh himself.

He was now entering upon a phase of his career far more perilous than that of overseas colonization, for he had become a prime favourite of the Queen, and an accomplished habitué of her Court. In such a position, and with so strong, impulsive, and versatile a character as Raleigh's, enemies were inevitable, and for the rest of his life he was more or less involved in intrigue after intrigue.

In his greatest difficulties, however, he never lost his restless love of the sea, or ceased to play with the idea of promoting the welfare of an oversea Empire. It was thus very typical of him that when he was temporarily banished from Court, owing to an unfortunate love affair with one of the Queen's ladies of honour, he should employ his time in constructing the scheme for founding an

English colony in Guiana. He sent for maps and literature, and a certain Captain Whiddon, who had experience of that part of the New World. In the event, he dispatched Captain Whiddon on a sort of preliminary voyage of inspection, and then himself set out from Plymouth on February 6, 1595. By March 22 he was at Trinidad Island, where he captured the capital town of St. Joseph from the Spanish Government, and made all sorts of inquiries as to the resources and geography of the mainland.

As the result of this he arranged an expedition consisting of one hundred men, in several little vessels, and took them over 400 miles up the Orinoco River, receiving the allegiance of the Indians in the name of Queen Elizabeth. On arriving home he did not obtain much encouragement for this new addition to the Queen's dominions, and, in the end, it was Guiana that was to lead to his death. Twice he sent expeditions, at his own expense, to help the Indians against the tyranny of Spain, but he himself was not destined to see Guiana again till the year 1617. By then Elizabeth had died, James I had succeeded her, Raleigh's enemies had come into power, and he himself had been a prisoner in the Tower of London for thirteen years. Finally, however, James I released him and gave him permission to captain another fleet; and, on March 28, 1617, he sailed from the Thames once more for South America. He remained at Plymouth till July,

assembling and fitting out his three vessels, and reached the Canary Islands early in September, arriving at Guiana, to the joy of the native inhabitants, some three months later.

Here he learned of a rich mine in Spanish possession, and, being himself stricken with fever, he sent Captain Keymiss up the Orinoco to surprise and capture it. The attempt failed. The Spaniards had been forewarned and had every possible advantage. Raleigh's own son was killed, and Captain Keymiss returned after nine weeks to report the catastrophe. It was the end of all things for Raleigh, weakened as he was by fever, and certain of the King's displeasure. Keymiss shot himself in his cabin, and many of the crew were for remaining away from England altogether. The majority, with Raleigh himself, however, preferred to face whatever consequence there might be, and returned home sick at heart. It was the final opportunity for Raleigh's detractors, and he was executed under the original sentence, for which, so many years before, he had been sent to the Tower. Ironically enough, within a year after Raleigh's death, James I granted a charter to Roger North for the purpose of founding a British colony in Guiana.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR EASTERN TRADE

The Men in the Elizabethan Background—Edward Osborne as an Apprentice—His Rise to Commercial Fame—Overseas Enterprises—The Revival of the Levant Trade and Formation of the Levant Company—Ralph Fitch and his Journey to the East—Strange Adventures in Syria, Arabia, and India—His Pioneer Work in Burma and the Malay Peninsula.

LOOKING back over the Elizabethan epoch in our history, that gave us, in one little island community of somewhere about five million souls, such contemporaries, to name a few outstanding seamen-merchants, as Hawkins, Martin Frobisher, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Richard Grenville, and John Davis, it is hard to realize that there were behind these a far greater number of solid enterprising merchants, any of whom, in a less brilliant age, would have had a prominent place in history.

Such a man was Sir Edward Osborne, one of the greatest of London merchants, but one who kept himself more or less in the background, although there were few enterprises in which his judgment, his foresight and his wealth did not play an important part. It was perhaps, however, in his reviving and development of English trade in the Near East—with Greece and Turkey,

Palestine and Egypt—that he rendered his country his greatest services.

Though history, as it has been hitherto written, has decided that he was not so romantic a figure as some of the other men whom we have already dealt with, yet his rise to power and prosperity was based on a very human and romantic incident. Considerably older than Drake or Raleigh, it was before they were born, and while he was still a young apprentice, that there occurred the little adventure upon which, as it was to turn out, his future career was to depend. He was then indentured to a Sir William Hewett, a cloth dealer of Leicester, who had migrated to London, of which, in the year 1560, he rose to be Lord Mayor. Sir William Hewett had a house on Old London Bridge, and one day his little daughter Anne fell out from one of the windows. She was in imminent danger of being drowned in the river, when young Osborne, without a moment's hesitation, plunged in after her, and a boy and girl friendship presently ripened into love. As Anne grew up she became a beautiful girl. It was well known that she would be a great heiress, and she had, consequently, many suitors, of whom one, we are told, was the Earl of Shrewsbury. But the old merchant had never forgotten his debt to the young apprentice. The two were married in due course, Anne afterwards inheriting the bulk of her father's fortune. Nor was Edward to prove an unworthy husband, as all contemporary records

show. His name was obviously held in high respect by travellers and traders in every sphere. Testimony of this is to be found, for instance, in a letter written by an Englishman, one John Withal, who had settled in the town of Santos in Brazil, and there married the daughter of a Portuguese merchant. This man, writing home to Richard Staper, a merchant, well established both in London and Plymouth, suggested, in the year 1578, that he and Edward Osborne should send out to him a cargo of English goods, of which he would be able to dispose at three times their cost, and for which, in return, he would send back to them a cargo of sugar. It was also interesting to note that Manchester cottons, cloth, soap, knives, fish-hooks and tin were the goods suggested as being desirable in the Brazilian markets.

But it was in the Levant, and in the formation of the Levant and Turkey Chartered Company, similar to the one already established for Russia, that Osborne played his greatest part. This trade, formerly a very valuable one, had been allowed, for some reason, to lapse. Something of its nature and extent can be gathered from a little note upon it, written by Richard Hakluyt. From 1511 to 1534, he tells us, "divers tall ships of London with certaine other ships of Southampton and Bristol had an ordinairie and usuall trade to Sicilia, Candie, Chio and somewhiles to Cyprus, as also to Tripolis and Baruth and Syria. The commodities which they carried thither were fine kersies of divers

colours, coarse kersies, white westerne dozens, cottons, certaine cloths called statutes, and others called Cardinal Whites, and calve-skins, which were sold in Sicilie, etc. The commodities which they returned back were silks, chamlets, rubarbe, malmesies, muskadels, and other wines, sweete oyles, cotton wooll, Turkie carpets, galles, pepper, cinamom and some other spices, etc."

It was this trade that Sir Edward Osborne determined to re-establish, and for this reason, in the year 1575, in conjunction with Richard Staper, already referred to, he sent a couple of envoys, at his own expense, by way of Poland to Constantinople, in order to obtain from the Sultan a safe-conduct for his chief factor. This was one William Harborne, who sailed three days later, arriving at Constantinople within six weeks, where he was so successful that in a few months he obtained large concessions for his employers. These were embodied in a letter to Queen Elizabeth written in March, 1579, in which the Sultan assured her that he had given orders throughout his dominions that, whether they came by land or sea, none should hinder or molest English merchants. This was followed by a courteous reply from the English Queen, and the drawing up in June, 1580, of a Charter of Privileges granted to English merchants. For the next ten years, therefore, Edward Osborne's chief activities were bent towards the developing of these privileges, although he did not neglect, during that time, his

civic duties in the City of London. Thus, in the year 1583 he was Lord Mayor, and, although he seems to have wisely kept aloof from the troubled world of politics, he showed himself, on more than one occasion, a stout upholder of municipal rights. A few years afterwards, and just before his death, the Levant Company received its Charter of Incorporation, Edward Osborne being the first governor, as a well-deserved tribute to his "great adventure and industrie," the wealth that he had risked in building up the trade, and the wisdom and tact of his foreign dealings. With him were associated many great names, including that of old Sir John Hawkins, as well as that of one Ralph Fitch, with whose adventures we shall deal immediately. Like Sir John Hawkins, however, Sir Edward Osborne was now an old man, and this success was the crown of his career. From the humblest of beginnings as a young apprentice, he had raised himself into the great position in which he died, becoming the founder of the later dukedom of Leeds.

Like the Russia Company, founded, as we have seen, a generation earlier, the Levant Company, with Sir Edward Osborne as its chief promoter, was extremely well served by its various agents, who faced peril after peril as an ordinary and daily routine. Their records alone would fill a substantial and exciting volume, but possibly the outstanding figure is that of Ralph Fitch, a London merchant, who, being "chiefly set foorth," as he

puts it, "by the right worshipfull Sir Edward Osborne," sailed out of the Thames in the *Tyger* of London on Shrove Monday, 1583. With him were three particular companions, John Newberie, a fellow-trader, who had once before been as far as Ormuz in the Persian Gulf, William Leedes, a jeweller, and James Storey, a painter. But there were also on board three or four other merchants bound for various Eastern destinations, among whom was a man of parts, one Master John Eldred.

Their first objective was the port of Tripoli on the Syrian coast, not far from Beyrout, Tripoli being at that time a prosperous seaport town about the size of Bristol in England. Here they all arrived without mishap, and were lodged in the British Consulate, a square citadel-like stone building, with separate apartments provided for visiting merchants. From here, in company with John Eldred, Ralph Fitch and his three companions joined the caravan for Aleppo, where they arrived on May 21, staying there for ten days.

They then journeyed to Birra, a little town on the river Euphrates, and from thence by boat they and their English merchandise floated down the river as far as Basra, visiting the ruins of ancient Babylon en route. This town of Basra, made familiar to us during the Great War, was already, as Fitch described it, "a towne of great trade of spices and drugges, which came from Ormuz," and was also surrounded with large stores of wheat,

rice and dates. It was a place of such opportunity, indeed, that John Eldred, for his part, decided to remain there, paying, in the end, a visit of six months before returning to Aleppo. He did not, however, at once sail for England, but, before finally doing this, made two or three more eastward journeys for commercial purposes. Eventually he sailed from Tripoli in the *Hercules*, arriving in the river Thames on March 26, 1588, with the richest merchant cargo, as he tells us, that any single ship had ever before brought to London from the East.

Master Ralph Fitch and his friends, however, were for pushing their trade considerably farther afield, and consequently, leaving John Eldred behind them at Basra, they took ship down the Persian Gulf to the Island of Ormuz. This was then a great trading centre, under the command of the Portuguese, though nominally under a native prince, and here they found a busy assemblage, including merchants of almost every nation, together, as they put it, with "many Moores and Gentiles."

The chief articles of commerce were silk, spices, drugs, tapestries, pearls and Persian horses. Ormuz seemed to be an ideal theatre for the establishing of a permanent trading centre, and the three Englishmen, as a preliminary step, opened a shop for the display of their wares. They would also, it seems, have liked to arrange for the presence there of a permanent resident English agent, but

they soon found themselves the objects of a good deal of jealousy on the part of the other Europeans. These were principally Venetians who had already been established there for some time, and were evidently afraid of the competition of these new-comers. The Englishmen accordingly found themselves reported to the Portuguese Governor, as spies as well as heretics, and were ultimately arrested and thrown into prison. Very fortunately, during his previous visit, John Newberie had done some service to the Portuguese Captain-in-Charge, who therefore decided, perhaps as much for their own sakes as to satisfy their angry rivals, to ship them to Goa, south of Bombay, leaving the Portuguese Viceroy to solve the somewhat delicate and difficult problem that their presence in Ormuz had created.

This became, therefore, their next destination, whether they would or not, and, deeply as he resented his treatment and that of his companions, Fitch did not cease from making very careful notes of all that he observed during this involuntary journey. Thus, at the port of Chaul, where the ship put in, he particularly noticed a tree, which he described as the "Palmer," which, according to him was "the profitablest tree in the world; it doth alwayes beare fruit and doth yield wine, oyle, sugar, vinegar, cordes, coles; of the leaves are made thatch for the houses, sayles for shippes, mats to sit or lie on; of the branches they make their houses and broomes to sweepe, of the

tree, wood for shippes." In Goa the three Englishmen were treated very harshly by the Viceroy, but found a most unexpected friend in the person of a Wiltshireman, a Jesuit priest, named Thomas Stevens, by whose efforts they were set at liberty, while their further trial was pending. It was here at Goa, too, that James Storey, the painter, decided, probably for reasons not unconnected with considerations of personal safety, to embrace Jesuit doctrines, and entered the Brotherhood, though not for very long, as later he appears to have renounced his new religion and left the monastery. He remained in Goa plying his trade without, as it seems, ever again returning to his native country.

Ralph Fitch, however, with Newberie and Leedes, decided to take their fate into their own hands, and succeeded in escaping, on foot, from Goa, on April 5, 1585. For two days they travelled as their instinct led them, without the help of guides; and then they struck right across India to Masulipatam, on the Bay of Bengal, after which they made their way to Agra and Fatepore, where the Great Mogor, as they described him, lived in the most dazzling state. To him they had been entrusted with a letter from Queen Elizabeth; and history can hold few quainter pictures than that of these two London merchants, with their jeweller comrade, travelling through the central provinces of India to this great native emperor's throne.

They arrived in the autumn of 1585, and the monarch received them with the greatest courtesy. To the work of Leedes, the jeweller, indeed, he took such a fancy that he retained him at Fatepore. The original little party was thus slowly breaking up, and John Newberie now decided to go on alone to the town of Lahore, and thence overland to Constantinople, proposing to meet Fitch at Bengala in two years' time with a ship from England. Fitch, meanwhile, was to go yet farther east, from Burmah down to the Malay Peninsula; and accordingly, on September 28, these three stout friends and stalwart commercial travellers parted company.

For the next three years we find Master Ralph Fitch wandering up and down, in lonely independence, through Eastern India, exploring Burmah as far as the Chinese border, noting all that was to be noted in the way of trade, observing with a shrewd eye most of the native customs, and apparently, after his own cheerful fashion, making friends wherever he went. It was not until early in the year 1588 that he reached Malacca, where he found that the Portuguese, of the European settlers, were again wielding the most powerful influence in the trade with the still farther East. Pepper and spices from the Malay Islands, silver and porcelain from China, were the goods that these Portuguese merchants chiefly obtained for shipment to Europe.

Back again at Pegu, in Burmah, Fitch remained

there till September 15 of the same year, and then started, with his wide store of knowledge, on the long journey to England. On his way he visited Ceylon, rounded Cape Comorin, explored Cochin, and then ventured into the town of Goa again, whence he returned by way of Chaul to the Island of Ormuz, Basra, Babylon, Mosul and Aleppo to the British Consulate in Tripoli, on the Syrian coast. Amongst much other information, he had brought back with him full descriptions of the nature, uses, and geographical habitat of pepper, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, sandal-wood, camphor, aloes, musk and amber, of which little or nothing was then known in England. He arrived back in London, after eight years' absence, on April 29, 1591.

Few men of his generation had made such a journey, and it is gratifying to find the name of this shrewd and stalwart Londoner recorded among the directors in the first charter of incorporation of the Company of British Merchants trading with the Levant.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Henry Middleton's Voyages to Java and Sumatra—His Knighthood and the Formation of the East India Company—Further Adventures in the East and Conflicts with Turks and Portuguese—His Death at Bantam—The First Ambassador to India—The East India Company's First Governor—The End of the Tudor Era and the Beginning of the Stuarts—The Youth of Josiah Child—Dutch rivals and his Comments upon them—His Great Work for the East India Company.

IT would perhaps be not strictly true to say that the travels of Master Ralph Fitch, recorded in the previous chapter, were the chief factor in the formation of yet another of our great chartered companies. But there is no doubt that his report made a very profound impression on his contemporaries, especially when it was considered in relation to a little incident that had happened during his long absence. This was the capture by Drake, in the year 1587, while Fitch was still in Burmah, of a great Portuguese vessel, the *San Philip*, off the coast of Spain, laden with those very treasures of which Fitch was then exploring the source. This was not only one of the richest prizes ever brought to English shores, but the ship contained records of her earlier trading that came as something of a revelation to English merchants.

Besides the trade with Russia, already embodied in the first of the great chartered companies, the trade with Turkey and the Levant, embodied in another, which was about to obtain full incorporation, and the brilliant possibilities of the trade with the West Indies, here were India and the East Indies now looming, in a very practical sense, on the English mercantile horizon. In view of this the impetus given by the return of Ralph Fitch, four years later, from these very regions, can well be imagined.

Even before his return an expedition had been planned, and, in the very month in which he landed in England, three vessels had sailed for India, of which only one, the *Edward Bonaventura*, an Armada veteran commanded by James Lancaster, succeeded in returning, three years afterwards, with much valuable knowledge. Financially this voyage, as well as another organized in August of the same year, were failures, but the merchants responsible for them refused to be daunted, and resolved to try, and try again. Ultimately about one hundred of them formed themselves into an association, with a capital of some £30,000, and after a prolonged argument with Queen Elizabeth, obtained from her a charter in the year 1600. Thus was born what was afterwards to be, for several centuries, the greatest of all British chartered companies, the East India Company, representing an integral part of the growing Empire's economic life.

Immediately after receiving this charter another expedition was organized, again with Captain Lancaster in command, and consisting of the *Red Dragon* of 600 tons, the *Hector* of 300 tons, the *Ascension* of 200 tons, the *Susan* of 240 tons, and a smaller ship of 100 tons. Second in command to him, and captain of the *Hector*, was one Henry Middleton, afterwards destined to play a very considerable part in the pioneer work accomplished by the East India Company. Of his early life we know very little, except that he was apparently a north-countryman. He seems to have been a most competent and able adviser upon everything relating to the proposed expedition. He was approached and asked to be one of the three principal factors of the newly incorporated company in the overseas possessions that it was hoped to acquire; and he was entrusted, amongst others, with the provisioning of the little fleet.

It was on May 2 in the year 1601 that the five vessels sailed from Torbay, and from thence they proceeded to the town of Achenn, the principal harbour of the Island of Sumatra, where an alliance was formed with the king of the island, who subsequently wrote to Queen Elizabeth expressing his deep satisfaction at the arrival of her English subjects. Not only did this expedition succeed in acquiring great quantities of pepper and spices from Sumatra, but it also captured a large Portuguese vessel, laden with treasure, some of

which was afterwards exchanged at a considerable profit, for the native produce of the town of Bantam in Java, where Henry Middleton and his colleagues also established mercantile relationships. The expedition was entirely successful, and came back safely to England in September, 1603, with a very handsome return for the merchants who had interested themselves in the project.

The next voyage was undertaken in the year 1604, when Henry Middleton himself took command. He was back at Bantam again just before Christmas, where the company's agents had, in the meanwhile, been hard at work. They had bought and accumulated large stores of pepper and spices and other native products, and with these Henry Middleton loaded two of the ships for England, himself taking two other ships on a further voyage of exploration to Sumatra, opening up trade with various hitherto untouched islands. Curiously enough, it was at one of these, Ternate, nearly thirty years before, that Francis Drake had landed during his great voyage of circumnavigation, and so potent was the legend that he had left behind that the new king of the island was only too eager to welcome a fellow-countryman of the great sailor in the person of Henry Middleton.

Back in England again in 1606, Middleton was knighted for his great services, and three years later a new, more comprehensive and more permanent charter was granted to the company by James I. This conceded "the whole, entire and

only trade and traffic to the East Indies," for an indefinite period, and secured to the company that no one should be allowed to have any share in this sphere of English commerce without a licence from the directors, all the members of the company being bound by oath to be loyal to the King and faithful helpers of the company itself.

In the next year yet another voyage was undertaken, although this time Henry Middleton himself remained at home, and it was so successful that, on its return, the shareholders who had invested in the venture received a dividend of no less than 234 per cent. Encouraged by this, the directors resolved to build two new vessels, especially adapted for the new trade, and these were the forerunners of the East Indiaman which was to become so characteristic a type of British sailing vessel. The larger of these vessels, about 1,200 tons, was the biggest merchant ship yet built in England, and in her—she was appropriately called the *Trades Increase*—Sir Henry Middleton sailed in 1610. She rounded the Cape and sailed up the east coast of Africa, arriving at Mocha early in November, where the Turkish Governor professed great friendliness, and where Sir Henry Middleton was persuaded to make a stay ashore of some length. Unhappily, at the back of this invitation there was a treacherous intent, and he was held in captivity for six months. He succeeded at last in escaping, partly by promising never to return and push his trade there and partly by threatening

to attack the town. Nor was that the end of his difficulties. He next approached Surat, where he found a powerful squadron of Portuguese vessels posted at the mouth of the river in order to prevent the approach of traders from any other nation. He had only three vessels as against the twenty Portuguese ships, and consequently he at first tried methods of diplomacy. He had letters from King James I to the Great Mogul, who was not under the sovereignty of Portugal, and he pointed out that, as he wished them no harm, the Portuguese had no right to interfere with him. He therefore began to trade, but, finding the Portuguese opposing him, he decided to stand up forcibly for his rights, and attacked them with such success that he sank one ship, captured another, and put the rest to flight. He then made a treaty with the natives and laid in valuable cargo.

With that, as it turned out, it would have been better for him to have been content. But falling in with some other English vessels, he resolved to turn to Mocha and wipe out the damage that he had there suffered to his prestige. This he did, and then returned again to make further profit for his company at Bantam in Java, but his three vessels were now unseaworthy, and, to make matters worse, the *Trades Increase* struck a reef. She only just succeeded in making Bantam, where she had to be laid up for repairs. One of her consorts was sent back to England, the other was kept at Bantam with the *Trades Increase;* and mean-

while Sir Henry and his men made their home in a little village not far from the town.

Unfortunately there was no material in the neighbourhood with which to effect proper repairs to the damaged vessels, and while he was waiting for this to be sent out to him the *Trades Increase* went to pieces before his eyes. Worse, too, was happening ashore, for his men, not being acclimatized or immune from the various fevers endemic in the place, began to die one by one, and finally he himself became ill. Before the year was out he, too, had died, far from home, like Drake and Hawkins, but not before he had laid the foundation for his country of an Eastern trade of supreme importance.

Already, at home, the East India Company was being remodelled and regularized, and within a year of Middleton's death an English Ambassador to the East was dispatched to carry on his pioneer work. In that extension, with its then undreamed-of developments, many names were to shine more brightly, or, let us say, to capture more strongly the attention both of the public and the popular historians. But the groundwork of our Eastern trade, and ultimately of our Eastern Empire, was probably due as much to the efforts of Sir Henry Middleton as to those of any of the others, whose names have since outshone his on the roll of fame.

These, then, briefly, were the individual achievements and adventures, out of which the

great East India Company was born. It was fortunate to find in its first governor a man of outstanding qualities. This was Sir Thomas Smythe, who for twenty-five years was to remain its chief directing mind. The son of an earlier Sir Thomas, who had held the post of Farmer of the Customs under Queen Elizabeth, he had succeeded to his father's office. But he does not seem to have allowed this, in any way, to interfere with his loyal devotion to the young and growing East India Company. In its best interests he fought both well and consistently, in and out of Parliament, and abroad as well as at home; and it was he who was largely instrumental in the appointment of Sir Thomas Roe, of whom we have already spoken, to be the Ambassador to the East, and thereby to regularize the commercial relations between this country, India and the East Indies.

He seems to have held, too, the highest ideals as to English responsibility in these diplomatic dealings with native countries and communities. Thus, assembling the factors about to depart in the year 1614 to take up residence in the East, he exhorted them to avoid tyranny and evil behaviour, to be scrupulously honest in their commercial dealings, and thus to avoid "making the people hate and detest us before we be settled amongst them." He survived to the year 1625—sufficiently long to see the company well on its way to established prosperity.

The last of the Tudor monarchs, under whom

England had made such astounding progress in almost every sphere of human activity, had now died, and the troubled era of the Stuarts had begun. It was fortunate, therefore, for the company that, through its worst periods, it was to have at its helm an even greater man than Sir Thomas Smythe. This was Josiah Child. He was born in the year 1630, the son of a London merchant, who became Sheriff of Bedfordshire. The son was the most remarkable merchant of the whole Stuart period.

In his earlier life Josiah Child seems to have been chiefly engaged in commerce with America and the West Indies, and at the age of thirty-five we find him importing timber from New England for naval purposes. Nor were these his only interests, since he was a contractor for beer for the navy, and built a brew-house in Southwark to supply the King's household also. This was in the reign of Charles II, when he had become the owner of Wanstead House, where he lived with his first wife during the Plague of London.

The maritime supremacy for so long held by Spain had by this time, of course, waned, but a new and very efficient ocean power had risen above the horizon in the shape of the Netherlands; and it was while Josiah Child was residing at Wanstead that he produced a very remarkable document, in which he pointed out, for the benefit of his contemporaries, certain features in the general policy of the Dutch which he thought were worthy of

the most immediate attention. These features, he said, it would be well for his countrymen very seriously to consider; and his general appreciation of the problems raised—considering his age, for he was still only a young man—and the times in which he wrote, formed an extraordinarily prescient document over which it is tempting, for a moment, to linger.

Thus he pointed out, firstly, that the Dutch were in the habit of calling to their greatest councils of State and war practical trading merchants who had had actual experience abroad in most parts of the world, and who, besides being theorists, were traders of proved capacity. Secondly, he drew attention to the laws of inheritance prevailing in the Netherlands, by which every child shared equally in the parental estates after the death of the parents, and so were left, as a rule, considerably better provided for than under the English custom, whereby the eldest son inherited and the younger children had usually to shift unaided for themselves. Thirdly, he commended the very "exact making of all their native commodities and packing of their herrings, cod-fish and all other commodities, which they send abroad in great quantities; the consequence whereof is that the repute of their said commodities abroad continues always good, and the buyers will accept them by the marks, without opening; whereas the fish which our English make in Newfoundland and New England, and herrings at Yarmouth, and our

pilchards from the west country often prove false and deceitfully made."

Fourthly, he laid great stress upon the official encouragement given by the Dutch to the inventors of new manufactures, and the discoverers, as he put it, of any "new mysteries" in trade, and to those that "shall bring the commodities of other nations first in use and practise amongst them, by which the author never goes without his due reward allowed him by the public charge." He also praised the Dutch methods of education, whereby daughters were taught, as well as sons, so that a man's wife had the capacity to carry on his trade after his death. In regard to this, he said, the woman being "as knowing therein as the man, it doth encourage their husbands to hold on in their trades to their dying days, knowing the capacity of their wives to get in their estates and carry on their trades after their deaths; whereas if a merchant in England arrive at any considerable estate, he commonly withdraws his estate from trade before he comes near the confines of old age, reckoning that if God should call him out of the world while the main of his estate is engaged abroad in trade, he must lose one-third of it, through the inexperience and incompetence of his wife to such affairs, and so it usually falls out."

He further praised their banking arrangements, which he estimated to secure a profit for the public amounting to at least £1,000,000 a year, and their religious tolerance, "by reason whereof many in-

dustrious people of other countries, without dissent from the established government of their own churches, resorted to them with their families and estates, and after a few years' cohabitation with them, become of the same common interests." He also noted the promptness of their civil litigation by which "all controversies between merchants and tradesmen are decided in three or four days' time, and with not the fortieth part (I might say, in many cases, not the hundredth part) of the charge they are with us." He laid stress, too, upon the facilities granted in the Netherlands for the transference from one man to another of bills of debt, whereby it was made possible to turn over stocks twice or thrice for every once in England.

Lastly, he emphasized the low rate of interest there prevalent as compared with that charged in England. "Here in England," he said, "the high rate of interest makes matters difficult for the young merchant, while it tempts the older ones to turn usurer, so that instead of continuing at their honest trades they have found the sweetness of interest; neither scattering by their experiences so as the poor may glean after them, nor working with their hands or heads to bring either wax or honey to the common hive of the kingdom, but swelling their own purses by the sweat of other men's brows, and the contrivances of other men's brains." He was also a most trenchant critic of the existing English methods of harrying the beggar and the poor in general.

This, then, was the man, with economic views far ahead of most of his contemporaries, who was destined, during his later life, to be at the helm of the East India Company. We can gather a good idea of its general position from a summary of his own writing, at the age of thirty-nine. From this it appears that the company then employed regularly about thirty vessels and three thousand sailors; that it supplied the nation with its saltpetre, pepper, indigo, calicoes and drugs to an amount equivalent to nearly £180,000 per year; and that it supplied the same articles for re-exportation to something like three times that amount. "Were it not for the East India Company," he wrote at this time, "we should be at the mercy of the Dutch traders; we should have to buy foreign linens instead of calicoes that come from our own dependencies, and we should lose the protection secured for the country by the employment of so many stout ships and mariners."

This was in the year 1669, and eight years later another of Child's reports showed further substantial progress. Over £400,000 worth of goods and bullion were now being annually exported in the company's vessels, and about thrice that amount was being yearly conveyed in the shape of other commodities to the English markets. This prosperity was, of course, reflected in the shares of the company, which rose from a value of £70 in the year 1664 to £360 in 1691; and Josiah

Child himself, by the end of Charles II's reign, held about one-third of the total stock.

With a bold nose, an obstinate mouth and two deep furrows between his eyebrows, his portrait is not that of a man who could pass through life without making enemies. Moreover, he was ruthless to incapacity and dishonesty in any form, and did not hesitate to purge very thoroughly the personnel of East India House. Apart from these very obvious causes of enmity, of course, many individual merchants and other companies, such, for instance, as the Levant Company, were directly hit by the enormous strides which the East India Company was making under Josiah Child's able guidance.

But Child paid very little heed to his enemies, pursuing his own course and extending his trade wherever possible. In India, Ceylon, Java and Japan evidences were to be found of his activities in almost every commercial field. Made a baronet in the year 1678, he seems to have stood aside from politics, as far as any man was able to do so during a period of such sudden and violent changes. But it was in his brain that the idea of a political Indian Empire seems first to have taken shape. This was partly owing to an unfortunate incident leading to a passage of arms with the Great Mogul, in which his own elder brother, Sir John Child, the Governor of Bombay, was seriously worsted.

Thus, writing in the year 1689, the directorate

of the company, reflecting no doubt the master mind of Josiah Child, said that "the increase of our revenue is the subject of our care as much as our trade. 'Tis that must maintain our force when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade. 'Tis that must make us a nation in India; without that we are but as a great number of interlopers, united by His Majesty's Royal Charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us; and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch in all their general advices which we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade."

Living to the age of nearly seventy, he was destined to be survived by his third wife, who is recorded as being in her old age so closely allied to the chief nobility of England that eleven dukes and duchesses used to ask her blessing, and that some fifty great families would go into mourning for her. Of Sir Josiah Child himself a contemporary historian wrote as follows, "He was a man of great notions as to merchandise, which was his education, and in which he succeeded beyond any man of his time. He applied himself chiefly to the East India trade, which by his management was raised so high that it drew much envy and jealousy, both upon himself and upon the company. He had a compass of knowledge and apprehension unusual to a man of his profession. He was vain and

covetous and thought too cunning, though he seemed to be always sincere."

Whatever may have been his faults, however, Josiah Child was, at any rate, the ablest director of its affairs that the great company had had, and furnishes incidentally an interesting example of the great extent to which the British aristocracy is derived throughout its history from the ranks of the commercial classes.

CHAPTER IX

COLSTON OF BRISTOL AND PATERSON OF DUMFRIES

Westward Ho!—The Earlier British Colonies in America—Bristol and the Trade with the New World—Colston's Enterprise and Benefactions—William Paterson and His Early Days in America—A Plan for Colonising the Isthmus of Darien—William Paterson and his Part in the Union between England and Scotland.

WE have been following hitherto the expansion of English oversea trade as it developed eastwards during the reigns of the Tudor and earlier Stuart monarchs; and the merchant-adventurers, at whose history we have lately been glancing, have been associated chiefly with the city of London. In the person of Edward Colston, however, a provincial contemporary of Josiah Child, we return again to Bristol, and must first take a brief survey of what had been happening in the New World beyond the Atlantic.

Founded in the year 1636, about half-way through the reign of Charles I, several of the North American colonies, or plantations as they were at first called, were already so well established as to have become a source of profit to the country's trade. The oldest of these was Virginia. As we have seen, the pioneer work there had been largely done by Sir Walter Raleigh, and a patent had

been granted in the year 1606 to two Companies of Merchant-Adventurers, the one in London and the other in Bristol. Ten years later this colony had already become prosperous, and by 1622 several Virginian towns had outpaced in size and wealth those that had been established two generations earlier in the Southern Continent by the Spaniards. Then, and for many years afterwards, tobacco was of course the staple product of this senior North American colony, but wheat and timber were also becoming important exports. Eight years before Colston was born the plantation was supporting three thousand inhabitants, and its annual production of wealth was estimated at £400,000.

Four years later, in the year 1632, and four years before the birth of Edward Colston, the colony of Maryland had been founded by Lord Baltimore, and here again the tobacco leaf was the chief article of culture, although this colony was rapidly developing a trade in timber, pitch, tar and furs. Farther north, in the year 1621, New Plymouth had been established by the Pilgrim Fathers; the colony of Massachusetts had been first settled in the year 1629, New Haven in the year 1635, and Connecticut in the year 1636. By the time Edward Colston was seven years old these four latter plantations, or settlements, had been combined in the name of the United Colonies of New England—New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island being soon afterwards associated

with them. It was a rich country, heavily timbered, with a fertile soil, and deposits of iron and copper, and it was washed by seas of which the fisheries were soon to prove a considerable asset in the new colonies' wealth.

From the West Indian islands also England was beginning to draw a regular and increasing revenue. Of these Barbados had been granted by Charles I in the year 1627 to the Earl of Carlisle; and after the introduction from Brazil, in 1641, of the sugar cane, it was destined to become the most prosperous of them all. Barbuda, Nevis, Antigua and Montserrat had all become English four years before Colston's birth, and to these Jamaica was added when he was nineteen years old.

Now in all these new settlements, and in the growing stream of commerce between them and their parent country, the town of Bristol, as far as England was concerned, played the most important part. Just as it had been the Bristol merchants who had supported the Cabots, so it had been the men of Bristol in the days of Queen Elizabeth who had backed up the enterprises of Drake and Hawkins, of Gilbert and Raleigh, and it had been chiefly owing to the enterprise and persistence of the merchants of this town that the colony of Virginia, after many vicissitudes, had become the focus of English settlement throughout the southern coastal areas of what is now the United States of America.

It was a great inheritance, therefore, that these

Bristol merchants handed down to their successors, and the boy Colston found himself growing up in what had long become established as the great gateway to the West. Humming with every sort of activity, the great houses of Bristol's oversea merchant-traders were already offering lavish hospitality in such streets as Redcliffe Street, Temple Street and Thomas Street, while in the market-place and Exchange commercial representatives and ship captains of almost every civilized country in the world were constantly to be met. In later years such seaport towns as Liverpool and Glasgow were of course to rival and surpass Bristol, but these as yet were scarcely more than villages and of small national significance.

The last of an old family of Bristol merchants, the forbears of Edward Colston had been settled in the town for at least five generations. The first Colston had been apparently a North-countryman, who had been attracted to the south-western city by the great reputation of William Canynge and his associates towards the end of the fourteenth century. Edward Colston's own father, William Colston, was himself one of the best and most wealthy of Bristol's citizens, being Sheriff in the year 1643, when Edward was a little boy of seven, and receiving as an honoured guest King Charles I at his private house in Small Street.

Of the sort of atmosphere in which Edward Colston grew up a good deal can be learned from the study of contemporary records. Thus, when

Edward Colston was but two years old, we find a petition made by a Bristol company of merchants in which they state that "they have been many years settling a plantation in new England, which was begun long before such multitudes of people went over; all they intend to send are regular people, neither factious nor vicious in religion; their plantation is apart from all others, and they desire now to transport one hundred and eighty persons, to provide victuals for furnishing the ships employed in the fishing trade upon that coast, for which they have built and made ready two ships." Similarly, thirteen years later, we find Oliver Cromwell granting a licence to a Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Yeoman and other merchants of Bristol and owners of the ship *Mary and Francis* "to accompany the naval fleet then about to depart for Barbados," while a year later, by a similar order of the Commonwealth, "liberty was given to Henry Hazard and Robert Yeoman, of the city of Bristol, merchants, to carry two hundred Irishmen from any port in Ireland to the Caribbee Islands"; thus foreshadowing that great emigration of Irishmen which has been one of the features of Western European colonization.

Five years after this, permission was granted to another Bristol merchant, a Mr. Ellis, to transport one thousand dozen shoes to the Island of Barbados. It was in the West Indies trade, indeed, that Colston's father was himself chiefly engaged, selling English goods there, and importing native products

for home consumption; and it was to this business that Colston succeeded, after a period spent in Spain, as a commercial agent, and some years in London as a merchant on his own account. His father was an old man when he died, and it was therefore not until he himself was over forty that Colston came back to Bristol as head of the family business. He must already have acquired considerable wealth, and his philanthropic bent had long been manifest; and henceforward his benefactions were continuous both to his native town as well as to London. In the year of his father's death he was made a Governor of Christ's Hospital, to which he subscribed annually sums varying between £100 and £500. He was largely interested in the sugar trade then rapidly developing, and in the year 1689 he started a sugar refinery in the town of Bristol, which he sold eight years later, devoting the proceeds very largely to the founding of a workhouse.

During the later part of his life his chief place of residence was at Mortlake, on the Thames, but he spent a good deal of time at Bristol, where he still kept his father's old house. He appears also to have had lodgings in Whitechapel in order to be able to supervise more closely his shipping interests in the London Docks.

Remaining a bachelor to the end of his days, his generosity was perhaps on a larger scale than that of any of his contemporaries. To the poor in Whitechapel he was particularly kind, and every year he went round the debtors' prisons, both in

Whitechapel and Marshalsea, inquiring into the circumstances of the unfortunate inhabitants, and freeing as many of the most deserving inmates as he could. On one occasion he sent a lump sum of £3,000 to liberate the debtors in Ludgate Prison, and in the year 1709, when a bad season had reduced the London poor to an extreme of wretchedness, he gave a present of £20,000 to be applied for their benefit.

It was for Bristol, however, the city of his forefathers and of his own childhood, that he reserved the greater part of his charities. Here he established and endowed an almshouse for twelve poor men and twelve poor women, and it was characteristic of him that, when one of his ships, long given up as lost, entered harbour with a rich cargo, he applied the whole of its produce to the relief of the suffering of his less fortunate fellow-townsmen. He further made provision for the permanent support of six poor sailors in an extra wing of his almshouse, and he later, in spite of a good deal of local opposition, provided the funds for doubling the accommodation of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, a school for boys in which he was keenly interested.

In the year 1710, although then seventy-four years old, he was elected Member of Parliament for Bristol, almost against his will, the whole city being illuminated in his honour with bonfires. It was not until the year 1721 that he died at his house at Mortlake, being then eighty-five. His instruc-

tions as to his funeral were typical of his life. There was to be no pomp or extensive mourning. He only asked to be buried in Bristol and to be attended to the grave by his poor permanent guests, "especially the six poor old sailors from the Merchant Almshouses in the Marsh."

So much then for Edward Colston, one of the noblest figures of his age. It was while he was still a young man of twenty-two, and while Oliver Cromwell still held the reins of power in England, that there was born in Scotland, in most contrasted conditions, a baby who was destined to have even a profounder influence on both countries. In a little farmhouse at Skipmyre, in the parish of Tinwald, a few miles to the north of Dumfries, William Paterson first saw the light—the son of a long line of farmers. Trained as a child in the principles of the Covenanters, he remained, although he escaped the persecutions that so many of these devoted men had to undergo, a stubborn idealist throughout his whole chequered life, patient in failure after failure, and genuinely altruistic to the end.

Never a place-seeker, and always a pioneer, he was one of those men of whom it may be said that others continually reaped where he with toil and difficulty sowed; and he was perhaps, in a strictly material sense, quite the least successful of any of those merchant-adventurers with whom we have so far dealt. Few of them, however, led a more varied life or were the possessors of so versatile and fruitful

a brain, and not many have survived so long in the shape of the permanent institutions or reforms due to their genius and now an integral part of our national life.

At the age of sixteen, William Paterson left school and gravitated to Bristol, a sphere of activity, as we have seen, as profoundly different as could well be imagined from the lonely hill-top farmhouse of his early upbringing. In that bustling, adventurous and prosperous town, he began absorbing the first elements of commerce; and it was while he was living in Bristol as a young man that he seems to have inherited a small sum of money with which he was enabled to make some sort of an independent beginning for himself.

To be young in Bristol in the sixteen hundreds and to have a little cash almost inevitably meant an adventure in the New World; and accordingly for the next few years Paterson divided his time between New England and the West Indies, with occasional periods at home. In the prosperous little town of Boston he married the widow of a Puritan minister, and for five or six years he traded successfully between this town and the Bahamas. While he was thus engaged, and when he was still only twenty-six years of age, there dawned in his mind the first idea of a project, destined, alas! to end most tragically.

This project was to found a colony on the Isthmus of Darien, in the region of the present Panama Canal, and it must be admitted that his

plan had a great deal to recommend it. As he pointed out, this was the geographical key to both North and South America, as well as to both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

"The Isthmus of America," he wrote, "all things considered, is in healthfulness and fruitfulness inferior to few, if any, of the other places in the Indies, as naturally producing plenty of gold-dust, dye-woods and other valuable growths, vast quantities and great variety of the best timber for shipping, in the known world, and is capable of yielding sugar, tobacco, indigo, cocoa, vanilla, annatto, ginger and such like of the best and in great abundance. But besides, and above all, as being an isthmus and situated between the two vast oceans of the universe, it is furnished on each side with excellent harbours, between the principal whereof lie the more easy and convenient passes between the one and the other sea. These forts and passes, being possessed and fortified, may be easily secured and defended against any force, not only there, but that can possibly be found in those places which are not only the most convenient doors and inlets into, but likewise the readiest and securest means, first of gaining, and afterwards for ever keeping, the command of the spacious South Sea, which, as it is the greatest, so even by what theory we already know, it is by far the richest side of the world. These ports, so settled with passes open, through them will flow at least two-thirds of what both Indies yield to Christen-

dom, the sum whereof in gold, silver, copper, spices, saltpetre, pearls, emeralds of value and such like, will hardly amount to less than £30,000 sterling yearly. The time and expense of the voyage to China, Japan and the richest part of the East Indies, will be lessened more than a half, and consumption of European commodities soon be more than double, and afterwards yearly increased."

For a long time, however, he could obtain no support for his plans, either in England or the Continent, and it was characteristic of his many-sided, energetic and busy nature that in the meantime he became closely connected with, and indeed, the pioneer of a far different project. This was nothing less than the founding of a great national bank "to exchange such current bills as should be brought to be enlarged, the better to give credit thereunto, and make the said bills the better to circulate." Now, up to the present time, there had been no such institution in England. Throughout mediæval times the only persons who could in any sense have been considered as bankers were practically, as regards their clients, in the relation of pawnbrokers. The old Italian merchants who lent their name during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to Lombard Street, in London, were largely engaged in a money-lending business of this description, and their methods were afterwards adopted by many prominent London merchants, such as Sir Richard Whittington and Sir Thomas

Gresham. These men were all in the habit of accepting jewels, suits of armour, family treasures and so forth as security for their loans. In later days the goldsmiths especially became prominent as money-lenders of this order. Persons in need of money would come to them for advances, pledging securities or leaving bills; or they would deposit with them for lending purposes such surplus money as they had no immediate need of. High rates of interest were charged for such services, and for many generations no doubt this rough-and-ready method did undoubtedly confer a considerable amount of benefit on the trading community at large as well as upon private persons. The system, however, was both cumbrous and wasteful. Much idle capital was kept tied up, gold was flowing more and more into the safe-rooms of the goldsmiths, and there was always danger of defalcation on the part of these individual merchant money-keepers.

It was this condition of affairs that led, therefore, to Paterson's enthusiastic and persistent advocacy, beginning in the year 1691, when he was living in the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, of a really national bank, with the security of the whole country behind it, and charging a lower rate of interest for financial accommodation. But it was a hard battle, first through the House of Commons, then, after a still fiercer fight, through the very conservative House of Lords, and finally with Queen Mary, her

husband William of Orange being at that time abroad.

It was won at last, however, and in the year 1694 William Paterson, then thirty-six years old, had the satisfaction of knowing himself to have been the primary founder of the Bank of England, though he was destined to be afterwards connected with it for only a short time. For he was then, as indeed he remained throughout his life, in spite of his genius, a comparatively poor man and in a small way of business, although he was big with ideas for the public welfare.

He had succeeded in making, as such men must almost inevitably do, many personal enemies who were only too glad to use every chance of disparaging him. These were what may be termed inside enemies, since, in the eyes of the country at large, his ideas and his eloquent and forcible presentment of them had already made him famous. But these inner influences were, alas! too strong for him; and when his chief friend and supporter Michael Godfrey, the first Deputy-Governor, died, the intriguers became altogether too strong for him, and he was ultimately manœuvred out of his directorate.

Probably he was not very sorry to go, and from this atmosphere of petty jealousies and underground slanders he turned again with renewed vigour to his project of colonizing the Darien Isthmus. On this occasion he was, at any rate, successful in forming a definite company, his

chief supporters being recruited from his fellow-countrymen north of the Border, and the sum of £300,000 was soon subscribed by all classes of people. Here again, however, he had to meet fierce opposition. None of the three great existing chartered companies looked with favour on a possible rival; and the Russia Company, the Levant Company and the East India Company all worked to thwart his plans.

With their support he might possibly have succeeded, although that is doubtful. Even without it, had he lived in the days of Manson and Ross, and of the late great American sanitarians, he might possibly have succeeded. But as it was he failed utterly, and the story of the Darien settlers, unsupported as they were by the majority of the greater English merchants, is one of the tragedies of British colonization.

Insufficiently financed, the expedition was badly found and from the outset met with catastrophe. The landing-place was ill-chosen and the provisions gave out. The Indians, as well as the Spanish inhabitants of the district, were jealous of the new-comers. Fever was rife and soon took its toll, and of the eighteen hundred young men who sailed so hopefully in 1698 only one hundred and fifty returned, ill and worn out, during the following year. Paterson himself nearly died. He lost his second wife and his only child there, and it says much for his unselfish and upright character that there was a general recognition, both in England

and Scotland, that he himself was in no wise personally to blame.

Such a disaster would have crushed most men, and Paterson was now forty-two. But his was an indomitable nature, and meditating over the tragedy, he perceived that what had chiefly lain at the root of it was the ill-feeling and want of co-operation between the merchants of Scotland and those of England. Out of this there was born in him a new great idea and a new consuming passion to which he now dedicated his reviving energies; and this was the effecting of a union between England and Scotland and the formation of a United Kingdom of Great Britain.

In a last interview with King William III he definitely formulated this idea, "than which," he afterwards said, "I convinced him nothing could tend more to his glory and to render this Island great and considerable." Still poor, still, in the worldly sense, a failure, and still regarded askance by many very influential persons, he now pursued this new object both in season and out of season, and more perhaps than any one man contributed to the final result.

For many years he wrote pamphlets, interviewed statesmen, and persuaded merchants, and preached entirely disinterestedly this new gospel of his on both sides of the Border. "Not any sort of league, confederacy, limitation, agreement, or bargain, or, indeed, anything less or below a complete Union can introduce," he wrote, "the

good which may be justly expected therefrom, or effectually deliver these nations from the mischiefs and inconveniences they labour under, and are exposed unto, for want thereof. Nothing less than a complete Union can effectually secure the religion, laws, liberties, trade, and, in a word, the peace and happiness of this Island. And since, by the blessing of God, a happy occasion now offers for completing this great and good work, not in humour or in rage, but in cool blood, with reason and understanding, it is hoped that this, after all the troubles, hazards, and disasters of these nations for want thereof, a Union shall in their temper and disposition be concluded, to the glory and renown of our excellent Queen, and common benefit and general satisfaction of all her subjects, as having but one interest and inclination may for ever after be of one heart and one affection." Finally his dream was realized, and almost the last work of the last independent Scottish Parliament, in the year 1707, was formally to commend William Paterson to Her Majesty Queen Anne for his great and outstanding efforts in bringing about the union of the two countries.

With the rest of his troubled and idealistic life we cannot pause to deal. Suffice it to say that his ill luck dogged him almost to the end, and that it was not until he was fifty-seven years old, and only four years before his death, that he received any adequate recognition. He was then voted by Parliament the sum of £18,000, as an indemnity

for the many expenses that he had been put to in the service of the State. When he had paid his debts this left him only a small sum. But he had never been intent on amassing wealth, and few men so entirely forgotten as William Paterson is to-day can have better served their generation or left so lasting an impress on their country's life.

CHAPTER X

SOME EARLY NORTH COUNTRY MERCHANTS

The Rise of Liverpool as a Commercial Port—Thomas Johnson and the Virginian Trade—The Beginnings of the Old Dock—Thomas Johnson's Services to the Borough in Parliament—His Neglect and Death in Virginia—The Rise of Glasgow and some of its Earlier Merchants—The Fish and Tobacco Trades and the First Glasgow Ships—Patrick Colquhoun and the Formation of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce—His Treatise on the Linen Trade and Work for Commerce Generally.

IT will have become clear from the foregoing chapters that throughout later Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart times the second port in England, and indeed the next most important town to London, was Bristol. What its position was in the middle of the seventeenth century we have seen in reviewing the life of Edward Colston, and it will be remembered that the town of Liverpool was then referred to as being comparatively unimportant. In the present chapter, however, it becomes necessary to travel north and to study very briefly the chief factors that were already at work in laying the foundations of the great Lancashire seaport, and in stimulating the enormous industrial development that was to change the whole face of the northern part of England and of the southern counties of Scotland.

Small as it was, however, during the greater part of the seventeenth century, Liverpool had been a borough, owning equal civic rights with those of London and Bristol, since the year 1229, in the reign of Henry III. Nevertheless it was in reality but a tiny village, and fifty years later than this there were only one hundred and sixty-eight houses in it. During the next three centuries it actually grew smaller, although by the end of that period it was doing a certain amount of regular trade with Ireland, or, more accurately, acting as a harbour for Irish merchants on their way to Manchester.

In this respect it had come slowly to take the place of Chester, owing to the fact that the river Dee became, as sea-going vessels grew bigger, less navigable; and the Irish shippers, with their loads of flax for the Chester merchants, found it more convenient to unload their goods at Liverpool, on the Mersey. This led to a period of considerable friction between the older and younger port, and for a long time Chester, jealous of its ancient importance, regarded Liverpool as a sort of upstart suburb. But in the year 1626 Charles I conferred a new charter upon the Mersey town, raising it to the status of a city, with one James Strange, Lord Stanley, for its first mayor.

It was then still very small, but there were already signs of the future greatness that awaited it. It was now the chief market, for instance, in the north-west quarter of England for the textile

goods produced in such established towns as Manchester, Bolton, Blackburn, Rochdale and Bury, in Lancashire, and in the rising Yorkshire towns of Halifax, Leeds and Bradford. It had also been found to be the most convenient port of embarkation for the hardware goods now being made in such places as Sheffield, Walsall and Birmingham, while large quantities of iron were already being imported by Liverpool merchants from the Continent. Irish flax remained, however, the chief import of the growing little seaport town, whose fleet of ships was becoming somewhat considerable.

National and political events began also to play an important part in its development after the death of Charles I. Oliver Cromwell found it, for example, to be the best highway to Ireland, while the Irish troubles of 1641 led to the emigration into the town of a not inconsiderable number of Irishmen, who thus founded that Irish colony which has ever since played so noticeable a part in the civic life of Liverpool. Furthermore, the Plague and Fire of London in the years 1665 and 1666, with their temporary disastrous effect upon the commerce of the capital, had brought to Liverpool many London merchants anxious to make a fresh start in new and less afflicted surroundings. Amongst its inhabitants in the year 1673, for instance, a contemporary wrote that there were " divers eminent merchants and tradesmen, whose trade and traffic, especially in the

West Indies, make it famous, its situation affording in great plenty, and at reasonabler rates than in most parts of England, such exported commodities as are proper for the West Indies, as likewise a quicker return for such imported commodities by reason of the sugar-bakers and great manufacturers of cotton in the adjacent parts; and the rather for that it is found to be the convenientest passage to Ireland, and divers considerable counties of England, with which they have increase of traffic. Here is now erected at the public charges a famous town house, placed on pillars and arches of hewn stone, and underneath is the public exchange of the merchants. It hath a very considerable market on Saturdays for all sorts of provisions and divers commodities, which are bought by the merchants, and hence transported as aforesaid."

The foundations of the town were, therefore, as will be seen, by this time well and truly laid, and in the building of the great structure that was afterwards to arise upon them few men played a more prominent or public-spirited part than Thomas Johnson, destined though he was, like William Paterson, to die in comparative obscurity and to be largely forgotten.

The son of a Bedford man, Thomas Johnson's father had migrated to Liverpool, where he had already begun to receive civic honours just about the time when Thomas Johnson himself was born; and the older man lived to hand over the mayor-

alty of Liverpool to his son Thomas in the year 1695. The latter was then still under forty, but apparently a successful and intelligent man of business, although in his later life he seems to have devoted most of his energies to the fortunes of his birthplace rather than to his own.

It was as a dealer in cheese, oil and timber, and also in Virginia tobacco, that Thomas Johnson was chiefly engaged, when not about municipal business; but the part that he played in composing the very acute differences that had arisen between the cheesemongers in London and the Liverpool shippers, whose harbour dues were considered by the former to be excessive, led him to be elected, in the year 1701, as Member of Parliament for the growing city. This was the beginning of a parliamentary career that lasted for twenty years, during which time, while pressing in particular the interests of his constituents, he stoutly maintained a liberal attitude and was a steady champion of religious tolerance.

We have already referred to cheese as one of the commodities in which Liverpool was developing a considerable trade, and to this there was now being added salt from the Cheshire mines, also a most valuable article of commerce. It was so valuable, indeed, that the Government had already discerned in it a useful field for the taxation imperatively required for the furtherance of Marlborough's military campaigns on the continent of Europe. In this case also Johnson

fought hard to obtain as advantageous terms as possible, and he afterwards played the same part, on behalf of his fellow-townsmen, in respect of tobacco.

Tobacco was by now much the most important of all the articles in which Liverpool dealt; and, indeed, the progress of the town for the next one hundred and fifty years may roughly be divided into three commercial eras—fifty years of tobacco, fifty years of slave-trading, and fifty years of cotton. In the first of these eras the population grew from about 5,000 to 18,000, in the second from about 18,000 to 80,000, and in the third from 80,000 to 450,000.

In Johnson's time the tobacco era was in its early days. In the first ten years of the eighteenth century imports from Virginia amounted to about 12,000 tons, of which a little over 7,000 were for reshipment to other countries. Of this trade, Liverpool already had a larger share than any other town in the country. Here, again, Johnson was prominent in guarding the interests of his native town, of which many of the older ones were, as before, growing increasingly jealous. But perhaps his greatest work of all was in the creation of Liverpool Old Dock, the oldest dock in the kingdom, and a crucial event in Liverpool's civic history.

Up to that time, although it had advantages over the river Dee, the Mersey was not to be compared either with the Thames at London, the

Severn Estuary at Bristol, or the Humber at Hull; and Thomas Johnson and his friends were resolved, if possible, to outstrip all these ports. In the year 1699, therefore, the first beginning of an artificial harbour was made, although it was not until a few years later that the work was undertaken in real earnest. At last, in the year 1708, when the Corporation found itself with an income of £1,200 a year, and the Mersey was being used annually by over three hundred ships, it was resolved to go ahead.

Before this time a timid beginning in improving the navigation of the Mersey had been made in the year 1694 by one Thomas Patten, a merchant of Warrington. He had widened the river and made it navigable between Runcorn and Warrington. Important, however, as this improvement of the navigation of the river was to prove, the necessity to adapt the waterway to the purposes of its increasing sea traffic was even more pressing. The Corporation, therefore, instructed its two Members of Parliament, Thomas Johnson and Richard Norris, to obtain the necessary authority for the conversion of the pool into a great harbour.

A year before that Johnson had been knighted, much against his will, for his services to the town, and he now succeeded in obtaining parliamentary consent for the levying of the necessary dock rates and the floating of a loan by the Liverpool Corporation. There was much opposition, but as Johnson

sagely pointed out, the proposed measure would not only be of value to the commerce of the nation generally, but would be a very great service to the Navy, there being no other dock convenience on that coast. The work proceeded slowly, but within twelve years the Old Dock was completed. It was soon, however, to become inadequate to the enormous demands which were being made upon the port, and has been long since filled up to make room for the Liverpool Custom House; but it was the first great step in Liverpool's history as a mercantile harbour, and Johnson lived to see some of its results, though not, alas! to enjoy them.

With these results we shall have occasion to deal in future chapters, but Thomas Johnson himself was never, as we have said, a rich man, and during his twenty years of unselfish devotion to the interests of the town of Liverpool in Parliament he became steadily poorer. At the end of these years, when once more re-elected, a singularly ungracious but successful appeal was made against him on the ground, never contested by him, that he was not a landowner worth £300 a year, and was therefore ineligible as a parliamentary representative. A few months afterwards he was glad to obtain an appointment worth, we are told, £80 a year in Virginia, and it was here, some six years later, that he died as an obscure and unremembered custom-house officer.

Turning from Liverpool to Glasgow, we

discover that the now famous Scottish town, just as in the case of its Lancashire rival, was not destined to rise into greatness for several centuries after such towns as London, Bristol and Norwich, for instance, had become wealthy; and it was not until the union between England and Scotland, in which, as we have seen, William Paterson played so striking a part, that it really began to make substantial headway.

For all that, however, its commercial history was a long one, the earliest figure of prominence among its merchants being that of William Elphinstone, a contemporary of William Canynge, whose history we have already considered. This William Elphinstone, who may reasonably be said to have been the founder of Glasgow's commercial life, was an exporter of fish, dry herrings and salmon especially, which he chiefly sold to France in exchange for wines and brandy. With his profits, which were considerable, he helped to endow Aberdeen University, founded by his son, Bishop Elphinstone, and destined in later years to become the *alma mater* of so many notable scholars.

Another early merchant of Glasgow was one Archibald Lyon, who undertook, we are told, many great voyages to Poland, France and Holland, and built numerous houses and shops in the Glasgow of the year 1500. Like so many of the merchant-adventurers whose lives we have been studying, he was the younger son of a noble

family, and he himself became the founder of a prosperous line.

Yet another figure who gave a substantial impetus to Glasgow commerce was one Walter Gibson. He was originally a brewer, but in the year 1688 he fell under the glamour of oversea adventure, hired a Dutch vessel of 450 tons, and packed it with barrels of herrings. These he shipped to France, where for each barrel of herrings he received a crown piece and a barrel of brandy. With the crown pieces he purchased salt, and afterwards sold both the salt and the brandy so satisfactorily that he was able to purchase, not only the Dutch ship in which he made his original venture, but two other vessels almost as large, thereby setting to his fellow-citizens an example that they were not slow to imitate.

An even more striking example of the success of individual enterprise and judgment was that, however, of William Flakefield, the son of another Glasgow merchant of the same era. Apprenticed to a weaver, and finding the work monotonous, he enlisted in the year 1670 in the Cameronian Regiment, afterwards joining the Scots Guards, and living for some years on the Continent. Here there caught his eye one day a sudden novelty in the shape of a blue and white check pocket handkerchief, and the idea occurred to him of returning to Glasgow and introducing this elegant article to his fellow-townsmen.

He therefore returned in the year 1700,

collected a few spindles of yarn fit for the purpose, and manufactured as his first sample about two dozen of these handkerchiefs. The delicate texture and the pattern at once appealed to the Glasgow merchants, who bought up his handkerchiefs, the first of the kind ever sold in Great Britain. That was the beginning of what, in these days, would be called a "boom." The demand for these new articles very quickly exceeded the supply; looms were hastily installed, and merchants and weavers from all parts of the country came to study the new process. Like so many other pioneers, however, William Flakefield seems to have lacked the ability to amass wealth for himself and to have died in extreme poverty.

Meanwhile there was beginning upon the banks of the Clyde the first stir of that great shipbuilding industry later to become renowned throughout the whole world. Thus, in 1662, lower down the river Clyde, where the water was deeper and more suitable for large ships, the enterprising Corporation of Glasgow bought thirteen acres of land to be laid out in streets and harbours. The full benefit of this began to be felt in the year 1707, upon the union of England and Scotland, whereby the latter country became for the first time an actual sharer in the colonial enterprise of England. Quick to realize their new opportunities, the Glasgow merchants hired ships and were soon engaged, chiefly in the tobacco and sugar trades, with the North American and West Indian ports.

Ten years later the first Glasgow-built ship crossed the Atlantic to Virginia, and soon she had many consorts yearly adding to the wealth and importance of the Scottish town.

Let us pause for a moment, however, in case this picture of prosperity may create a somewhat false impression, for Glasgow at this time, in spite of the energy and enterprise of its inhabitants, was after all but a little country town about the size of Banbury and still six days' journey from London in a fast chaise. The journey, as a rule, indeed took nearly a fortnight, but a daily horse-post had just been instituted, the arrival of the postman from Edinburgh at the Tron Gate at six o'clock every morning being signalled by the firing of a gun. The number of ships owned by the Glasgow merchants at this time was but a score, and their total tonnage amounted to perhaps one-ninth of that of such modern giants as the *Olympic* or the *Aquitania*. There were but three hundred yards of pavement in the town, known as the Plain Stanes, situated in front of the town hall, and there the "tobacco lords," as the prosperous Glasgow merchants had been nicknamed, were wont to promenade up and down in cocked hats and scarlet coats.

But in the thirty years from 1740 to 1770 the shipping of Glasgow rose from 5,000 to no less than 60,000 tons. Most of these ships remained in the hands of the tobacco merchants, the majority of whom had formed themselves into a company

for "undertaking the trade to Virginia, the Carribean Islands, Barbados, New England, St. Christopher, Montserrat and other colonies in America." Those were rich years for the tobacco traders, but towards the end of the century the trade began to wane, chiefly owing to the disastrous and mistaken war with the American colonies. It was a critical period in the town's history, but in the person of Patrick Colquhoun, Glasgow was fortunate in finding a citizen who helped perhaps more than any other single man to tide her through a critical period.

He was born in the year 1745, and was left an orphan before he was sixteen years old, his father having been an old schoolfellow of Tobias Smollett. While still a boy he emigrated to Virginia, where he carried on a local trade across Chesapeake Bay. His health began to fail, however, and consequently, at the age of twenty-two, he returned to Glasgow, where he started as a merchant, and seems to have prospered from the outset.

His first great work for the town was in the founding of a coffee house, later to be developed into the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce; and in 1782, when the building was completed, he was elected its first chairman. The object of this organization was to consider plans and proposals for the development of every branch of foreign trade, to assist individual traders in their various lines of business, and to protect the interests of

the whole mercantile community. It is safe to say that no other single measure was of greater benefit to the progress of the town. In the following year Patrick Colquhoun wrote an improved treatise on the linen trade, and five years later, at the personal request of Pitt, he investigated and reported upon the cotton trade of Great Britain as a whole. In every way, indeed, he was indefatigable, and no sooner had he accomplished this particular task than he went to Flanders, and especially to Ostend—at that time a great Continental centre for the European distribution of goods from the East Indies—in order to see how far and how best British manufacturers might compete there. It was largely through his efforts, too, that a little later British muslins were introduced into the Continent, and a new and extremely lucrative branch of commerce thereby opened to British merchants.

Possibly on account of the wider influence that he could exert upon his country's trade, Patrick Colquhoun then moved to London, where he was frequently called upon for expert advice. There, among many other activities, he acted as the agent of several West Indian islands; he was also the first to organize the system afterwards developed into the river police. Several Continental towns also entrusted him with their interests as their British agent.

Active commerce on his own account he had given up at the comparatively early age of forty-

four, having by that time acquired a fortune sufficient to enable him to devote himself to economic research. Mere money-making, indeed, seems always to have taken a secondary place in his scheme of life, as of many other pioneers, and he was soon as universally respected in London as he had been in Glasgow. In this manner, and with these interests, he lived for another thirty years, to die at last, in 1820, at the age of seventy-five, with a record of achievement that most men might envy. He had set a standard of commercial idealism that was to bear fruit long after his death.

CHAPTER XI

GREAT GEORGIAN MERCHANT PRINCES

The Three Eras of Liverpool's Prosperity—John Gladstone and the West Indies—Work for the Liverpool Corn Exchange—His Fight against the Monopoly held by the East India Company—His Activities in Parliament and Benefactions—Alexander Henry and the Growth of Manchester—A Great Distributing Agency—His Voyages Across the Atlantic.

WE have now come to the opening of a new era in the life of these islands, the embryonic stirrings of which have already become visible to us in the preceding chapters. Hitherto, in spite of the progress of our oversea colonies and other possessions, and in spite of the activities that we have noted in dealing with the life histories of the later Stuart and early Georgian merchants, England remained as it had been in the days of Elizabeth, predominantly agricultural.

The day of the factory had scarcely dawned, and such industry as there was remained to a large extent domestic in character. The revolution to be wrought by steam had hardly yet been dreamed of by any human brain, and the enormous potentialities for these islands of their hidden coal and iron were still a secret of the future. Roads were scarce; the main turnpike road, for example, from London to the North

ended at the town of Grantham, and the vast bulk of the roads beyond were little more than beaten field-tracks. Leisurely journeys were performed in coaches or upon horseback; highway robbery was still frequent; while the cost of a journey from such a town as Glasgow to London was equivalent in modern money to that of a first-class ticket to the Antipodes. For better or worse, however, all this was now to be changed with almost headlong rapidity, and in the transformation of the people of these islands into a great industrial nation it was the north country, with its resources of coal and iron, that was to play the most striking part.

Let us return, therefore, for a little while to the rising town of Liverpool, successively concerned with tobacco, the slave trade and cotton. It was not in cotton, however, but in corn that John Gladstone, the first subject of the present chapter, started his commercial life, his father being a corn merchant at Leith, near Edinburgh, where John was born in the year 1764. According to the older fashion, he started work young, and while yet in his teens was helping his father, himself a wealthy corn and flour merchant and shipowner. During this time the young John Gladstone was voyaging on his father's behalf to the Baltic, as well as to America. By this means he trained himself to be able, at the early age of twenty-one, to accept a partnership at Liverpool in a firm of corn merchants, with whom he

remained for the next fifteen years. He then established himself on his own account as a dealer, not only in corn, but in cotton, sugar, and almost every other product then being imported into England from America and the West Indies.

Liverpool was about to make a sudden and enormous stride in importance, and John Gladstone had for his contemporaries such well-known merchants as Thomas Leyland and William Ewart. With the latter especially he was on terms of the greatest friendship, and it was after him that he named one of his sons, William Ewart Gladstone, who, later on, was to play so large a part in the political life of his country.

The Liverpool slave trade was then, more or less, on its last legs, and John Gladstone seems to have taken no personal part in it, although he was already acquiring extensive interests in the slave-holding colonies. Thus, in the year 1808, he became the owner of large estates in the West Indies, including sugar plantations in Jamaica, whose products he sold to his English customers. A man of the strongest principles and clearest judgment, he bitterly opposed, though himself a convinced Tory, the anti-American policy of the Government that was to lead a few years later to the second American war. His efforts were in vain, in that the disastrous Orders in Council were not repealed for four years, but he kept his head and laboured day and night to mitigate the immense economic confusion that they caused.

In measure after measure for the development of Liverpool he was a leading, if not the prime mover. It was largely through his efforts that the Liverpool Corn Exchange was opened in the year 1809, and that parliamentary consent was obtained for the construction of the Brunswick Dock, for the conversion of the dry dock into a wet dock, for the building of what was to be known as the Queen's Half-Tide Dock, and for the filling up of the Old Dock, whose history we have noted in association with Thomas Johnson, to make room for the new custom-house.

Equally great in its beneficent influence on the expansion of Liverpool were his efforts to obtain the removal of the monopoly, now becoming unhealthy to the general trading interests of the community, of the great East India Company. So cogent were his arguments and those of his associates that in the year 1813 everything except the Company's trade with China and its tea trade in the Indian Ocean was thrown open to all comers. Upon Liverpool, at any rate, the effect of this was instant. Gladstone himself sent one of his ships, the *Kingsmill*, the next year for the first time to the East Indies, and she returned in twelve months laden with cotton, sugar, indigo, spices and choice woods. She was the first of many ships to make profitable voyages, and it was not very long before Liverpool trade with the East was only second to that which the town carried on with America.

A few years later John Gladstone was once more prominent in securing yet another important measure. For some years the chief channel of transport between Liverpool, Manchester and various neighbouring manufacturing towns had been the Bridgewater Canal, constructed by Brindley. This had been made in the year 1773, with generally excellent results, but fifty years later it was proving quite inadequate, while its monopoly was an obstacle to adequate improvement. Accordingly plans were made for the construction of an additional means of communication in the shape of a railway. The proprietors of the canal bitterly opposed the project, and the matter had to be brought before Parliament. A Committee of the House was appointed to go into all the circumstances, and it was before this body that John Gladstone was examined. His representations constituted an astonishing summary of the growth of Liverpool even within his own personal experience.

When he settled in Liverpool, he said, there belonged to the town 431 vessels, carrying some 70,000 tons. In a little less than forty years the number of these had grown to 1,115, carrying nearly 180,000 tons. In the year that he had first settled in Liverpool some 3,600 vessels of all nations had entered the port. Thirty-six years later this number had increased to no less than 10,000. Four lines of ships were trading regularly with New York, and two lines were trading with

Philadelphia. The case for increasing the conveniences of traffic between Liverpool and Manchester and the other neighbouring tributary Lancashire towns, as put before this Committee by John Gladstone and his fellow-townsman, William Brown, was unanswerable, and the result was the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1830.

By this time John Gladstone was a very rich man, and had bought for himself a Scotch estate in Kincardineshire; it was there that he thenceforward spent most of his time. He had by no means retired, however, and was actively interested, not only in the Royal Bank of Edinburgh, but in the Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee Railway Company, of which he was the principal founder.

An ardent politician, he was three times a Member of Parliament—once for Lancaster, once for Woodstock, and a third time for Berwick—while he fought Dundee in the Conservative interest when seventy-three years of age. He was shrewd, and seemed, as one of his biographers has put it, "to take the whole map of the world into his mind at a glance, and almost by intuition to discover not only which were the best markets for to-day, but where would be the best opening for to-morrow." But he was also the soul of generosity, and gave lavishly of his wealth. In the year of the battle of Waterloo (1815) he built, for example, at a cost of £14,000, the church of

St. Andrew, in Liverpool, and two years later endowed another, with its schools, at Seaforth. In 1841 he built and endowed the church of St. Thomas-in-the-Fields, Toxteth, and built a hospital about the same time for incurable diseases in the town of his birth, Leith. Here also he built and endowed yet another church, with its manse and attached schools.

On his estate of Fasque, in Kincardineshire, as well as in the surrounding country, he was immensely popular, and in the year 1846 he was recommended for a baronetcy by Sir Robert Peel. It was at Fasque that he died, in 1851, at the age of eighty-seven, to be well described by one of the contemporary journals as "the master spirit of the age in which he lived, every inch a merchant tradesman, keen, energetic, industrious and fore-seeing, cautious and prudent, yet withal liberal and generous, without being lavish or needlessly profuse."

Although a much younger man, Alexander Henry, of Manchester, whom we have coupled for consideration with John Gladstone, and who was a contemporary of the latter for many years, played a very large part in building up the foreign trade of the great Lancashire metropolis. Of Irish extraction, he gained his start in life through the earlier enterprise of an uncle of his, also named Alexander, who had been born in Ireland in the year 1766. Like so many Irishmen before and since, this uncle had fallen under the glamour of

America, and had emigrated in the year 1783 as a lad of seventeen. There he had obtained a position as a junior clerk in the town of Philadelphia, and some years later had started as a merchant on his own account in the textile industry. For some little time he had had a hard battle to establish his industrial position, and, with other merchants, a still harder one to consolidate that of his chosen town. But he had been successful in both directions, and when he retired twenty-four years later he had helped to build up the prosperity of Philadelphia, besides making an ample fortune for himself. A man of deep religious instincts, he was a generous giver and a far-seeing citizen, and the younger Alexander could have found no better mentor at the outset of his own career.

He too had left Ireland at an early age in order to enter his uncle's American house of business, but returned to England in 1804 with a view to establishing in Manchester an agency for the Philadelphia firm, and also to launching out for himself in what seemed to him a sphere of wider possibilities.

Beginning in a comparatively humble way in a house in Palace Street, Manchester, he found himself breathing an atmosphere electric with change and charged with a myriad new ideas. The enormous possibilities of the steam engine were beginning to impress themselves on the minds of all thinking men, and the spinning-

jenny of James Hargreaves, the spinning-frame of Richard Arkwright, and the power-loom of Edward Cartwright had ushered in an era of unimagined productivity as far as the cotton industry was concerned. Goods were now being manufactured at such a pace and in such undreamed-of quantities that the finding of new markets and fresh means of distribution had become an imperative necessity; and it was in this direction that Alexander Henry perceived and seized his opportunity.

He was already in close touch with the American markets, and soon found his business as a distributor growing so rapidly that he took his brother Samuel into partnership and moved into larger premises in Spear Street. Concentrating at first on their North American connexions, the two brothers developed these to such an extent that they had soon established valuable and increasing agencies in most of the larger North American cities; but they also dispatched agents to every quarter of the globe, to Brazil, Australia and the South Sea Islands, thereby building up what was probably the greatest distributing organization in the world.

Both Alexander and his brother Samuel worked day and night at this gigantic task, and there was no detail of their ever-growing and complicated business with which they were not familiar. Dealing at first almost wholly with Manchester cotton goods, they soon discovered that their machinery

was equally useful for the distribution of other fabrics. If their world-scattered agencies, they argued, could place cottons, why not woollens and silks and worsteds? Accordingly they decided to establish collecting stations, as they might be called, in the centres of these other industries, and installed themselves at such places as Bradford, in the heart of the worsted manufacturing district; at Belfast, among the linen makers; at Leeds, in the woollen area; at Huddersfield, in the cloth country; and at Glasgow, among the Scottish textile workers.

It was always, however, with the world overseas in their minds that they took each forward step, and it was chiefly in America that they saw their field of opportunity. They became known, in fact, as the American House, and much of their time was spent on the Atlantic. How much can be guessed from the fact that the average trans-Atlantic voyage in those pre-steamship years lasted thirty days, that Alexander Henry was once, owing to mishaps and bad weather, more than two months in making the passage, and that he crossed the Atlantic more than thirty times. It was on the Atlantic, indeed, that his brother Samuel at last met his death, four years after the two brothers had established their headquarters in yet bigger premises in Portland Street, Manchester, and had made their house the greatest of any doing business with America. This was while he was travelling in one of the earlier American

steamers, the ill-fated *Lexington*, that caught fire on her way from New York to Providence, and in which almost the whole of the crew and all the passengers perished. A generous tribute was paid to him by one of the chief American magazines. "In his business intercourse," it said, "with his fellow-men, rigid uncompromising integrity marked his character. No one knew better the principal requirements of a merchant, or the generosity becoming a man, and throughout his life he ever maintained the strictest consistency of high mercantile principles and the most generous liberality."

To Alexander Henry his brother's death was a blow of the severest nature. Between them they had created a business almost without parallel of its own kind. But the effect of the tragedy was only to immerse him deeper than ever in a hundred various activities. Six years later he entered the House of Commons as an ardent Free Trader and Reformer, and he was always an earnest and practical worker in the causes of educational and political liberty. A personal friend of the great Hungarian patriot, Louis Kossuth, he was twice his host when he visited Manchester. He was a man who stuck to his views and his friendships without regard to their popularity.

Like every successful organizer, Alexander Henry had the instinct of attracting and choosing capable helpers, and in each branch of his business was ably partnered by skilled and energetic men.

To the last, however, he maintained a keen and personal control, and this in spite of his civic and parliamentary duties and his philanthropic interests. It was not until the year 1862 that he died, fifty-eight years after he had first come back from America, and by then the name of Henry was well known from Siberia to Honolulu. Almost every day from his vast warehouses packages were being sent out in various forms—in the shape of bales of scarves for Demerara, of coloured shawls for the west coast of Africa, of arctic clothes for Scandinavia, for mule transport and man transport through mountain fastnesses or tropical jungles, to cover or adorn mankind in Boston parlours, in Samoyede houses, and Zulu kraals.

But after the introduction of steamers Alexander himself never crossed the sea, and when he died it was with the knowledge that the enterprise of his heart was in good hands; among the partners were two of his sons, one of whom was in addition a distinguished surgeon.

Throughout Manchester he was genuinely mourned, and though in the strictly municipal sense perhaps many of his contemporary merchants were more prominent, none had contributed more practically to the great cotton city's well-being and progress.

CHAPTER XII

SAMUEL CUNARD

The Rise of Sea-transport as an Independent Industry—Early Days of Cunard in America—His Conception of a Trans-Atlantic Steamship Line—The Formation of the Cunard Company—Competition with America—The Failure of the Collins Line—Progress of Steamship Building—Leviathans of the Sea.

IT has now perhaps become manifest, as we have been studying the life histories of these various pioneers of British oversea commerce, that a process of gradual evolution in respect of shipping had been taking place. We have seen, for example, that the earlier Saxon, Norman and Plantagenet merchants were not only men of commerce but also themselves their own shipowners, as well as being skilled navigators. In later Tudor times and during the reigns of the Stuarts, while many British merchants themselves, as we have noticed, made long and perilous voyages, they had, as a class, ceased to be practical seamen, although they owned the ships that carried their products.

Later still the building of ships and the carriage of goods and passengers to all parts of the world tended to become more and more an independent industry, and with the coming of the steam era this tendency very rapidly increased. The sphere

of competition between the East Indiamen and China clippers of the various individual tea and produce firms became slowly transferred to that of a keener rivalry between the growing shipping companies, or, as we have now come to call them, "lines."

It was in the earlier days of the nineteenth century that this new development first became notable, and Samuel Cunard was one of its ablest and most far-sighted sponsors. Curiously enough, just as Alexander Henry's uncle had been a merchant in Philadelphia, so had Samuel Cunard's father been in business, and almost at the same time, in this same American city. Later, however, he had migrated to Nova Scotia, and it was at Halifax that Samuel Cunard was born in 1787, just seventeen years before Alexander Henry returned to set up his world-wide distributing business in Manchester.

From early days, although he began life as a merchant, Cunard was interested in shipping, and gradually he formed a scheme in his mind for the establishment of a regular line of steamers between England and the United States. Let us glance for a moment at the position of the steamer in these first years of Cunard's business life. It was in the year 1802, when he was fifteen years old, that the first successful practical steamer came into being in the shape of the *Charlotte Dundas*, constructed by Symington on the Forth and Clyde Canal. She carried an engine, designed by the great

James Watt, of Glasgow, which drove a stern wheel. Her success inspired the American engineer Robert Fulton to build the *Clermont*, in New York, five years later. This vessel, also engined by Watt, travelled up the Hudson River in 1807 from New York to Albany, performing the journey of 130 miles in thirty-two hours. We are told that an enormous and, on the whole, sceptical crowd gathered to witness the commencement of what was to prove a classical voyage. According to an account written in the New York *Evening Sun* of July, 1909, the *Clermont* "moved out into the stream, the steam connection hissing at the joints, the crude machinery thumping and groaning, the wheels splashing and the smoke-stack belching like a volcano," while "one honest countryman, after beholding the unaccountable object from the shore, ran home and told his wife that he had seen the devil on his way to Albany in a saw mill." Others described her as a "monster moving on the water, defying the waves and the tide, and breathing flames and smoke."

That was in the year 1807, but it was not until 1819 that the *Savannah*, a wooden sailing ship, crossed the Atlantic to Liverpool with auxiliary steam; and it was not until 1838, when the steamers *Sirius* and the *Great Western* travelled from England to America in little over a fortnight, that the trans-Atlantic steamer service may be said to have received its effective initial impulse.

Samuel Cunard was then in his fiftieth year, an age when many men are considering retirement, but it was in this year that he crossed to England to try to give practical effect to the ideas growing in his mind. Among his friends was Mr. Melvill, the Secretary of the East India Company, which was at that time itself beginning to consider the advisability of introducing steam into its own Eastern fleet. Cunard's idea was the establishment of a regular steamer service running between Liverpool and Halifax, a splendid natural harbour, and from Halifax to Boston. What he wanted was to get into touch with some enterprising shipbuilder, and Mr. Melvill gave him a letter of introduction to Robert Napier of Glasgow. Napier was impressed both with the man and his ideas, and, having considered them carefully, advised a consultation with Mr. George Burns. Burns was then a partner, with his brother and Hugh Matthie of Liverpool, in a line of small coastal steamers trading regularly between that port and Glasgow—a business that had been amalgamated eight years before with that of David McIver of Liverpool and his brother. Mr. George Burns, like Robert Napier, was both interested and impressed by Samuel Cunard's ideas and ability, and so was his partner David McIver, and they agreed to co-operate with Cunard, provided that the latter could obtain from the British Government the contract for the carriage of the American mails.

This was, at that time, in the hands of the Admiralty, and had never hitherto been entrusted to steamers, although the success and regularity of the Bristol *Great Western* Company's sailings had favourably impressed those in authority. When the contract was advertised in the following October, this was the company that it was generally assumed would obtain it. But Cunard's tender was so much more favourable that the Admiralty accepted it, and Cunard, Burns and McIver therefore formed, in the year 1839, the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, the embryo of what was afterwards to become the great Cunard Company.

This first contract was for seven years, and for a sum so comparatively small as £50,000 per annum the directors agreed to supply three suitable steamers and to make two voyages every month from Liverpool to the United States. As a matter of fact, they constructed four steamers, built on the Clyde and engined by Robert Napier; they were wooden paddle steamers of a little over 1,000 tons each, the *Britannia, Acadia, Caledonia* and *Columbia.* They were all of some 400 odd horse-power, and were capable of a speed of about eight and a half knots.

With Samuel Cunard in charge of the new enterprise at Halifax and Boston, David McIver at Liverpool, and George Burns and his brother at Glasgow, the management of the company from the outset was both bold and prudent. Success

came almost immediately, and in the year 1844 two more steamers were added, four others of nearly 2,000 tons each and with a speed of fourteen and a half knots being sent to sea in 1848.

Such prosperity and so phenomenal a growth was bound to cause considerable jealousy, and especially on the part of the *Great Western* Company, whose vessel had been one of the first two steamers to cross the Atlantic. The cry was raised, therefore, that an unfair and injurious monopoly had been granted to Samuel Cunard, and a parliamentary inquiry was asked for and obtained. This resulted in a triumphant vindication of Samuel Cunard and his partners. It was clearly shown that the country could have obtained the required services on no more advantageous terms, and that the vessels employed were superior in every way to any others regularly making the passage.

The Cunard Company was therefore not only well started but well ahead in the trans-Atlantic shipping trade, and the result of its efficiency was to provoke a natural and by no means unhealthy competition on both sides of the water. Generous as had been the welcome from the people of Boston and the United States generally towards the *Britannia* and her sisters, it was felt that America was falling behind a little in an oversea carrying trade of great and growing importance. A line of American steamships to run between New York

and Bremen, calling en route at Southampton was accordingly resolved upon; and in June, 1847, the American steamer *Washington* left New York for Southampton; on the same day the *Britannia* left for Liverpool.

It was the first race, in friendly rivalry, between a British and an American steamship, and it was won very handsomely by the Cunard Company's steamship *Britannia*, with a couple of days to spare. But the *Washington* was welcomed very hospitably at the German port of Bremen, the captain being invited to a special banquet in the town hall.

A still greater effort was, however, deemed necessary by the American people if they were to win the blue riband of the Atlantic. After much discussion, therefore, it was at last decided to make an exception in the American Government practice of opposing subsidies on principle, and to give substantial Government aid to the formation of an American line of steamships that might reasonably be expected to compete successfully with the great British company. The task of organizing and supervising this line of steamships, to which the American mails were to be entrusted, fell to Mr. E. K. Collins of New York, a man who had already gained great experience as the founder of the Collins line of sailing packets between Liverpool and New York. No expense was spared, and the American architects, true to a brilliant tradition, exercised all their ingenuity in the design of the four pioneer ships of the new

line, the *Arctic*, *Baltic*, *Atlantic* and *Pacific*, each vessel being of about 3,000 tons and 800 horse-power; and, in the year 1850, when Samuel Cunard was sixty-three years of age, they began to compete for the trans-Atlantic trade.

For the first two or three years they were certainly superior, as regards speed, to the existing Cunard vessels, but the fair promise with which they started was never destined to be fulfilled. A somewhat over-lavish capital expenditure proved a handicap to the immediate financial success of the company, and it suffered from a series of almost crippling disasters. Thus, in the year 1854, the *Arctic* was sunk in collision with a French steamer, with the loss of very many persons, amongst them being Mr. Collins' own wife, son and daughter. A year later the *Pacific* disappeared, leaving no trace and carrying to the bottom nearly two hundred lives, besides mails and two million dollars' worth of cargo.

Meanwhile the Cunard Company had not been idle. In the year 1852 it had added to its fleet four iron screw steamships, the *Australia*, *Sydney*, *Andes* and *Alps*, and in 1855, the year of the *Pacific's* loss, it launched the *Persia*, a vessel superior to any other in the company's service, and one of the most powerful hitherto constructed. In the following year this vessel, on four occasions, travelled from New York to Liverpool in a little over nine days; and it is interesting to note that, in this year, the average speed

of the Cunard vessels was again higher than that of any of their competitors. In 1858, when the shareholders of the unfortunate Collins Company discovered that they were only competing at a ruinous loss, the days of this undertaking were seen to be numbered, and shortly afterwards it collapsed altogether.

It was now clear to the world at large that in Samuel Cunard Britain had found a shipowner and organizer of the highest capacity, and, in the year 1859, at the instance of Lord Palmerston, Queen Victoria conferred on him a baronetcy. Possibly the valuable part that the vessels of his line had played as transports in the Crimean War may have had some influence in the bestowal of this well-merited reward. But his prescience and commercial ability had been of untold benefit to the whole industry of his country, and, as we shall presently see, had been a most valuable stimulus to many other vast shipping developments.

The Cunard line was now *facile princeps*, so far as the Atlantic was concerned, but the company's policy of cautious enterprise was in no way relaxed, and, in the year 1862, in the *Scotia*, it once more beat its own record. This vessel crossed from New York to Liverpool in eight days and twenty-two hours. Powerful as she was, however, she was a paddle-wheel steamer, and the last of a dying type; henceforward the screw-propelled vessel held the field in new marine construction.

Sir Samuel Cunard was now an old man, and

in the year 1865 he passed away, dying in his London residence at the advanced age of seventy-eight. He left a son, Sir Edward, to continue his work, and there were also succeeding to power in the councils of the company both younger Burns and McIvers, all men of sound judgment and great ability. From the outset, indeed, this pioneer company was singularly fortunate in its directors, and, after thirty-five years' trading, and when its trans-Atlantic fleet amounted to twenty-three steamers of more than 64,000 tons, it could proudly state that it had never lost a single life or a single letter. It was by then responsible for weekly sailings between Liverpool and New York and between New York and Liverpool, calling at Queenstown in the south of Ireland in each case. It was also maintaining regular services between Liverpool and Havre as well as with all the principal ports of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Following its founder's traditions, it continued to keep abreast of every maritime engineering development; and in the year 1881, in the shape of the *Servia*, it added the first steel vessel to its fleet. With the exception of the *Great Eastern*, this was the largest and most powerful vessel that the world had ever seen, and three years later she was followed by the *Umbria* and *Etruria*, which succeeded in bringing down the time of the passage from Queenstown to New York to six and a quarter days.

That was in the year 1885, and in 1893, in the *Campania* and *Lucania*, the twin-screw and triple-

expansion engine, invented by Dr. Price, were found in combination; while, in the year 1901, it was on board the *Lucania* that Mr. Marconi carried out some of his earlier experiments.

Meanwhile, Germany had appeared as another foreign competitor, and a competitor much more considerably supported financially than the Cunard Company had ever been, even in its earliest days. In 1900 the *Deutschland*, and two years later the *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, each with an average speed of twenty-three and a half knots, robbed this country of the blue riband of the Atlantic; and it was perhaps characteristic that it was the Cunard Company that once more brought it back into British hands.

In the year 1907, fitted with the turbine engines of which Sir Charles Parsons was the designer, the *Mauretania* and *Lusitania* regained the coveted blue riband, each being capable of a speed of over twenty-six knots. Huge as these vessels were, they were later to be eclipsed by the great *Aquitania*, the last word in luxurious construction, and one of the finest vessels now afloat. Nearly five times as long as the little *Britannia* of 1840, she is a fair index of the enormous strides made by the company since its foundation by Samuel Cunard. With engines of 60,000 horse-power, she was fitted out with a splendour that probably would have staggered even the fertile imagination of Samuel Cunard. With her swimming baths, her libraries, her Louis XVI staircase, her gardens,

her Palladian lounge and her Adam's drawing-room, she can carry well over three thousand passengers, in addition to a crew running well into four figures.

By the year 1914, indeed, the line of Cunard's brain had grown to such colossal proportions that it embraced no less than twenty-six steamers, with a total tonnage of over 300,000. That was, of course, before the War, and few of our mercantile shipping companies lost more heavily, during those disastrous years, than the Cunard Company, engaged as it was up to the hilt in every kind of war work afloat. During that time, though many additions were made to the company's fleet, and though various other vessels came under its control for the purposes of the war, it lost more than half its tonnage and many of its finest ships.

Of the services it rendered it is impossible here to give any adequate account, and it would be impossible to estimate their value to the nation at large. Suffice it to say that, during those fateful years, it brought to this country, regardless of peril, nearly seven and a half million tons of foodstuffs, munitions of war, and general cargo from America and Canada alone. In addition it was responsible for the transport of nearly a million troops during the same period, while its vessels steamed, in their country's service, a total distance of nearly three and a half million miles.

Among its directors the Navy found in its hour

of need some of its ablest maritime advisers, and in its crews and captains men with whom Drake and Hawkins would have been proud to sail as shipmates. Such had been the services when peace was declared of an undertaking that only eighty years before had been but an idea in one man's mind, brooding over the future of Atlantic transport.

CHAPTER XIII

BRIDGING THE ATLANTIC

Early Days of William Inman—The Iron Steamship and the Screw-propeller—The Emigrant Trade—Allan, the Sailing Ship Skipper—Possibilities of the Canadian Trade —The First Allan Steamers—Progress of the Allan Line —Thomas Ismay and "Room at the Top"—The Pioneer of Comfort at Sea—The Foundations of the White Star Line.

THE Cunard line, as we have seen, was founded in 1839, successfully competed with the American Collins line, and maintained, throughout the nineteenth century, a high position on the North-Atlantic route. It was by no means unchallenged, however, and among its most enterprising competitors was the line founded by a remarkable man, Mr. William Inman.

Born in the year 1825, William Inman was a generation younger than Samuel Cunard, but, in the shipping sense, at any rate, he started his business life a good deal earlier. His father was a business man, a partner in the firm of Pickford & Co., of Leicester, and it was in this town that young Inman was born and educated in his earlier years. From the collegiate institution at Leicester he passed to the Liverpool Royal Institution, and in 1841, at the early age of sixteen, he became

a clerk, first to Mr. Nathan Cairns, then to Messrs. Cater & Co., and finally to Messrs. Richardson Bros., who were all merchants of Liverpool.

To the last-named of these firms belonged a fleet of sailing vessels, plying between Liverpool and Philadelphia, and so impressed were Messrs. Richardson with young Inman's abilities that they took him into partnership at the age of twenty-four. These sailing vessels were then chiefly employed in the carriage of emigrants, and Inman was entrusted with the entire management of the fleet. This gave him not only a comprehensive knowledge of the rather complicated emigrant-carrying problem, but also directed the attention of his keen mind to the rapid progress and growing possibilities of steam navigation. The success of Samuel Cunard and the resulting activity of Mr. E. K. Collins doubtless stimulated William Inman's imagination, and they were assuredly considerable factors in determining him at last to found his own line of steamers.

He soon showed himself, in some ways, quicker to appreciate new developments than any of his older rivals. In the matter of the screw-propeller, for instance, successfully designed in the year 1804 by John Stevens in America, William Inman became the first British shipowner to inaugurate a regular line of steamers wholly consisting of iron vessels and all employ-

ing the screw-propeller. The original idea of such a line seems to have occurred, on this side of the Atlantic, to a Glasgow firm of shipbuilding engineers, Messrs. Todd and Macgregor; and in the days when more cautious shipowners were still regarding these developments a little askance, they launched the *City of Glasgow*, an iron screw-propelled steamer of about 1,600 tons and 350 horse-power. William Inman, who had been in correspondence with the firm, was greatly impressed by her build and potentialities, and, convinced that the future of steamships lay in iron-built and screw-propelled vessels, he strongly advised his partners to buy the *City of Glasgow*, which they did. In the winter of that year, 1850, they accordingly sent her across the Atlantic with four hundred steerage passengers, and they soon acquired a similar vessel in the *City of Manchester*, which made a profit for her owners, in her first year, of forty per cent.

With these two vessels they now established regular fortnightly sailings between Liverpool and Philadelphia, and, during the next five years, they added three more ships to their fleet, the *City of Baltimore*, the *Kangaroo*, and the *City of Washington*. The ill-fated Collins line, with whose story we have dealt in the previous chapter, was now in sight of its end, and Inman resolved, in the year 1857, to make New York one of his ports of call. In 1860 he developed a weekly service; in 1863 he increased this service to three

times a fortnight; and, in 1866, during the summer months, the Inman Company was maintaining a twice-weekly service of steamship sailings.

Meanwhile, on the final failure of the Collins line, Inman had perceived a further opportunity of successful enterprise. He obtained the contract for carrying the United States mails between England and America, and arranged his dates of sailing to coincide with the dates that had been adopted by the now defunct American line. It was in the emigrant service, however, that he continued to discern his chief possibilities. He catered for their comfort, and attracted such large numbers of these passengers in consequence, from all parts of Europe, that in the years 1856 and 1857 alone he carried no fewer than eighty-five thousand of them. In this trade he maintained the lead for many years, and in 1870 carried ten thousand more emigrants than his nearest rivals in this class of work, and nearly twenty thousand more, for example, than the older Cunard line carried. He showed a humanity and a consideration for the poor adventurers from the various underworlds of Europe that none of his competitors had hitherto exhibited, and he may justly be said to have been a real benefactor in this respect.

Nor did his vessels lag behind in the matter of size and speed. Thus the *City of Paris*—the first ship to bear that name—a vessel of 3,081 tons and 500 horse-power, set up in the year 1867

a westward record of eight days four hours. In the year 1873, too, in the *City of Chester*, and the *City of Richmond*, he added to his fleet two of the finest vessels then in existence on any ocean. Each was capable of developing 800 horse-power, was fitted with male and female hospitals, and provided, in the galley saloons, cooking facilities for fifteen hundred persons. The speed of these two vessels was sixteen knots, and they had a tonnage of 4,700. Both these vessels, on an average, made the Atlantic passage from New York to Queenstown in some eight and a half days. Two years later they were surpassed by the *City of Berlin*, a vessel built on the Clyde, and intended to excel the recently constructed *Britannic* of the White Star Line, in which the great shipbuilding firm of Harland and Wolff, at Belfast, had dealt a shrewd blow at the older Clyde shipbuilders. Built by Messrs. Caird & Co. of Greenock, the *City of Berlin*, with the exception of the *Great Eastern*, was the largest vessel afloat, while her speed was as great as that of the White Star Line's star vessel, the *Britannic*. She carried accommodation for over seventeen hundred passengers, and registered 5,500 tons, and was supplied with two compound condensing, direct-acting, high- and low-pressure engines that developed on trial 4,799 horse-power. Altogether she was acknowledged generally to be the finest steamship of her day under any flag, until she was eclipsed, six years later, by the great Cunarder

Servia, which we have already mentioned in the preceding chapter.

By the year 1875 the Inman line owned sixteen steamers, of a total tonnage of 44,000. William Inman was now fifty years old, a man of wide and varied interests. Besides being a member of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Trust, and of the first Liverpool School Board, he was a magistrate for the county of Cheshire, a captain of the Cheshire Rifle Volunteers, and chairman of the Liverpool Ship Owners Association. Married while quite a young man—in the same year, in fact, in which he first became a partner in the firm of Messrs. Richardsons Brothers—he was the father of twelve children, nine sons and three daughters. He did not, however, like Samuel Cunard, reach a ripe old age, but died in the year 1881.

Nor has his company survived, bearing his name, as has Samuel Cunard's. But it was destined, after his death, to mark at least one more epoch in steamship evolution. This was in the year 1888, when, with the two vessels, the *City of New York* and *City of Paris*, the Inman Company produced the first two regular Atlantic liners, carrying mails and passengers, to adopt the twin-screw principle. Each of these vessels was of 10,000 tons with five decks, and had a speed of nineteen knots, and in their internal architecture they were pioneers in many details since generally adopted. Thus the uppermost promenade deck afforded free scope for exercise to the passengers

while at sea, a passage up and down this deck fifteen times being equivalent to a mile's walk. The berths and dining-rooms were perhaps more spacious and architecturally effective than any hitherto found in trans-Atlantic steamers, a great feature being made of the central-dome principle in the dining-saloon. These two vessels were also, later in the year 1888, the first Atlantic liners to be fitted with the triple-expansion engine, invented by Dr. Price. It is very hard in fact to appreciate the full debt which the science and art of ship-building has owed to the individual enterprise and acumen of such men as Samuel Cunard, William Inman, Thomas Ismay and Alexander Allan.

With regard to the two last named, although of course what may be called the spade-work had already been done, not even the briefest study would be complete without mentioning their work. In Thomas Ismay, the principal figure of the early days of the great White Star Line, and in Alexander Allan, the shrewd spirit that divined the future of Canada in terms of sea-traffic, the Atlantic trade produced two men who left a deep impression on the history of shipping. Like the Collins Line in America and the Inman Line with which we have just dealt, the White Star and the Allan had their origin in fleets of sailing vessels, and Alexander Allan and his two sons were the first to develop a regular service of steamers.

A native of Saltcoats, Alexander Allan laid

the foundations of his success in Glasgow, where he became the owner of several sailing vessels, one of which he himself commanded for a time. He was thus practically acquainted with the sea, not only as a man of business but as a practical mariner; and when the success of the steamship as a means of transport between England and the United States seemed assured, it occurred to him to establish a service between Great Britain and Canada. During the summer months the great estuary of the St. Lawrence river offered splendid possibilities of steam navigation, while in winter, when this river was icebound, there were more easterly open harbours available.

Alexander Allan was the father of five sons, all of whom became interested in this project, two of them, James and Bryce, being themselves experienced seamen. In the year 1852, when the Canadian Government advertised for tenders for the conveyance of mails, their steamers were not ready, and another company, Messrs. McKean, McClarty and Lamont, of Liverpool, obtained the contract. This firm had four steamers available, and it was to them, when their first steamer had been constructed, that the Allans chartered it.

After about eighteen months, however, the service, as conducted by this firm, not proving sufficiently satisfactory to the authorities, the contract was transferred to the Allans themselves. But there was yet to be a further delay in the final establishment of what was to be known as

the Allan Line, for the Crimean War intervened, and the Allans' new steamers were diverted to Russia for transport services, so that it was not until the year 1856 that they were able to commence their regular sailings to Canada. At first these took place once a fortnight to Montreal in the summer months, and once a month, during the winter, to the harbour of Portland in Maine. These services were soon made weekly, while Halifax in Nova Scotia became the chief winter port of call. The port of St. John's, Newfoundland, was also embraced within the orbit of the Allans' enterprise, being reached from Halifax with the aid of an ice-breaker in winter, while a service was also established between Liverpool and Baltimore, additional sailings being made from Glasgow. In charge of all this, James, Bryce and Alexander established themselves at Liverpool, while Hugh and Andrew superintended the company's interests in Montreal, their earlier steamers being built by William Denny of Dumbarton.

Regularity of sailing, safety and efficiency were the watchwords of the company, and their steamers were well up to the standard in the matter of speed and modern equipment. Indeed, in the *Hibernian*, they were the first to introduce into the Atlantic trade, in the year 1861, the principle of the promenade deck covering the deck-houses and extending throughout the length of the ship, while they were actually ahead of the

Cunard, White Star and the Inman lines in the launching of a steel-built vessel. So greatly did the line prosper that, within a quarter of a century, it consisted of twenty-two steamships with a total tonnage of over 54,000.

That was in the year 1875, and a few years before this the White Star line had been founded, although, for many years previously, it had been in existence as a fleet of fast American clippers in the Australian trade. In this, its new phase, Thomas Ismay was the chief factor, and from the outset the ideal that he set before himself was the comfort of his passengers. In this particular respect —in what may be termed perhaps the hotel side of Atlantic travelling—he may justly be called a pioneer. In the construction of his steamers, all of which were built by Messrs. Harland and Wolff at Belfast, the comfort of his passengers was the primary consideration; and in the *Oceanic*, the first great White Star liner, many novel features were assembled.

Realizing that the old tradition of placing passengers aft made for acute discomfort with the arrival of the screw-propeller, he decided to put his passenger quarters forward of the engine-rooms, where the vibration and movement of the vessel were least noticeable. The saloons and staterooms were placed amidships, and the former were so constructed as to occupy the whole width of the vessel, being superior in ventilation, lighting and general upholstery to any yet in existence.

This, indeed, was the first of the modern luxury liners, as we know them to-day, far surpassed though she has since been, of course, by such vessels as the Cunard Company's *Aquitania* and the White Star Line's *Olympic*, built in 1910.

It was in the year 1867 that Thomas Ismay first "took hold" in the American phrase, and by then the Cunard, the Guion, the Inman and the National Lines were all thoroughly established. Believing in the general principle, however, that there is always plenty of room at the top, and finding in Messrs. Harland and Wolff shipbuilders and designers of the highest enterprise and efficiency, the *Oceanic* on her maiden voyage, begun on March 2, 1871, ushered in a new-comer among trans-Atlantic steamship companies that was very soon to take high rank.

Thus, in the year 1901, with the *Celtic*, the White Star Line launched the first steamer that exceeded in tonnage the famous but unsuccessful *Great Eastern*, for so many years the record-holder in mere bulk. Provided with swimming-baths, concert rooms and a gymnasium, she was so popular and profitable that, in 1904, when the White Star Line had formed American associations, though retaining its own British management, the *Baltic* was built on even bolder lines, to be further expanded, a few years later, in the shape of the *Adriatic*, and to be more than doubled in the ill-fated *Titanic* and her sister ship the *Olympic*.

As in the case of the Cunard, Allan, and indeed every great line, the services, during the Great War, of the White Star line, were beyond all computation; and in the first British hospital ship to be sunk, the *Britannic*, lost in the Ægean Sea in November, 1916, the White Star Line sacrificed the most modern, the most elaborately equipped and most expensive of its liners. Launched on February 26, 1914, from the yards of Messrs. Harland and Wolff, she had a tonnage of 48,150, while her estimated value was over £2,000,000. Fortunately there were no invalids on board at the time, but her crew and medical and nursing staff numbered over one thousand, and more than a hundred of these, unhappily, were either killed, wounded, or drowned.

CHAPTER XIV

EARLY DAYS OF THE P. AND O. COMPANY

Small Beginnings in Lime Street, London—The First Sailings to Spain—The Indian Mails and their Transport—Beginnings in the Indian Ocean—Rivalry with the East India Company—Sailings to China and Australia—The Effects of the Suez Canal—The Enormous Growth of the Company.

IN the last few chapters we have traced the gradual divorce between the great business houses and their shipping and the rise of sea transport as an independent industry, chiefly as it affected the Atlantic. But the same process was at work, immensely accelerated by the advent of steam, as regards our even larger Oriental and Australian commerce. The great Russian and Levant Companies as such had now ceased to have their previous importance, but the trading energies that they had fostered had branched out into innumerable independent concerns.

The East India Company, however, was still a very great power, and for a long time, as we shall see, clung jealously to its precedence in the matter of sea transport no less than in many others. Presently, however, the new disintegrating movement, based upon the colossal expansion of our oversea trade during the comparatively peaceful

Victorian era, was to prove too strong even for this ancient and honourable concern, and in the transformation of our eastern sea traffic no two men played a greater part than Brodie Willcox and Arthur Anderson. Both of them started life in humble circumstances, with far fewer advantages, for instance, than Samuel Cunard, Willcox being four years Cunard's senior and eight years older than his partner Anderson.

Born in Ostend in 1788, of mixed Scottish and English ancestry, Willcox was educated chiefly at Newcastle-on-Tyne. When he was thirty-two years old he had saved enough money to enable him to open an office for himself in London. Here, in the year 1815, with very small means and without much influence, he started in business in Lime Street, off Leadenhall Street, as a ship-broker and commission agent, and presently engaged as a clerk in his office a young man, Arthur Anderson, from the Orkney Islands.

Both men were industrious, capable, more than ordinarily shrewd and, needless to say, transparently honest, and by slow degrees they established not only a solid commission business, but became part owners of a few sailing vessels. In 1825 Willcox made Anderson a partner, and the new firm, under the title of Willcox and Anderson, moved to St. Mary Axe.

It was chiefly with the Peninsula—with Portugal and Spain—that Willcox's sailing vessels were employed in trade, and he presently estab-

lished a system of regular sailings, opening, when steamers became practicable, a scheduled steamship service. The firm still continued, however, its brokerage business, and in this connexion became the intermediaries in the chartering of a vessel—owned by Messrs. Bourne of Dublin, who were stage-coach contractors for the conveyance of mails in Ireland—to the Queen Regent of Spain. A little later, after diplomatic pressure on the part of the Spanish Minister in London, Messrs. Bourne decided to establish a line of steamships running regularly between London and the Peninsula. Brodie Willcox and Arthur Anderson were appointed agents for this new concern, and Messrs. Bourne sent to them from Dublin another young Scotsman, one James Allan, to assist in the management of this further venture. This was called the "Peninsular Steam Navigation," and became the parent of the now world-renowned P. & O. line.

Efficiently managed from the outset, it soon became so palpably the best company sailing to the Peninsula that, after much opposition from interested quarters, it obtained the contract for the carriage of mails, and in the *Iberia*, sailing in September, 1837, the directors had the satisfaction of seeing their country's mails for the first time entrusted to one of their steamers. By the terms of their contract they had to call at Vigo, Oporto, Lisbon and Cadiz on their way to Gibraltar; and here they transferred the Indian mails to a Govern-

ment steam packet travelling between Gibraltar, Malta and Alexandria. These steam packets were slow and inferior vessels, so that letters took nearly a month to reach Alexandria, whence they were transferred by land to Suez, to be reshipped at that port into steamers belonging to the East India Company plying to Bombay.

It was a cumbrous method and became more complicated when, in the year 1840, the lighter portions of the mail were sent, for the first time, through France to Marseilles, being carried from France to Malta by an Admiralty steam packet. From Malta these mails were then, together with the heavier mails that had arrived from Gibraltar, also in Admiralty steam packets, transported to Alexandria in yet another Government ship. So unsatisfactory and unpractical had these arrangements soon manifestly become, that it was at last decided, after a considerable amount of argument and opposition, that the Peninsular Company should establish additional fast sailings direct from England to Alexandria, the steamers employed calling only at Gibraltar and Malta, and being of sufficient size and speed to perform the journey in not more than three days longer than the time occupied in the conveyance of the lighter mails by the overland route via Marseilles, and at a cost not greater than that estimated for the equipment and maintenance of the Admiralty steam packets previously used.

The general scheme proposed by the managers

of the Peninsular Company being accepted, the Government insisted on public advertisements appearing asking for tenders for the carriage of mails under the prescribed conditions, but the lowest of these tenders being that received from the Peninsular Company, it was accepted by the Government. Messrs. Willcox and Anderson now therefore provided for this new purpose two vessels, the *Oriental* and the *Great Liverpool*, each of about 1,600 tons and 450 horse-power, and the company thereby became at last the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

This solved the European end of the problem, but the Indian one still remained in many ways unsatisfactory. The East India steam packets plying between Suez and Bombay were really unsuitable for the increased services, and greater efficiency in this respect now was urgently needed, while it was also felt by the Government that the establishment of an additional line from Calcutta to Suez had become imperative. For this development the Peninsular and Oriental Company's directors again made an offer, but the East India Company was exceedingly jealous of its prerogatives; and it was only after a great fight that, on September 24, 1842, the Peninsular and Oriental Company's latest vessel, the *Hindostan*, left Southampton to begin regular sailings between Calcutta, Madras, Ceylon and Suez.

The little company of which Messrs. Willcox and Anderson had first been appointed agents was

now a joint-stock concern, with a Charter of Incorporation from the Crown, and the *Hindostan* was so easily the finest and fastest vessel in Indian waters that, although the East India Company still clung tenaciously to its rights of mail-carrying between Bombay and Suez in the vessels of its Indian Navy, the Peninsular and Oriental Company was soon establishing a further service between Ceylon and China. The efficiency and economy of this, as well as of its Calcutta-Suez service, so aroused public opinion in India and the East generally that by the year 1854 the Court of Directors of the East India Company had given way, and the carriage of mails between Bombay and Suez also passed into the hands of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.

The contract into which, on January 1, 1853, the Peninsular and Oriental Company entered with the Government, provided that they should carry the mails fortnightly in each direction between England and Alexandria, and also fortnightly in each direction between Suez, Calcutta and Hong Kong, together with a subsidiary service between Marseilles and Malta. It was also provided that the Peninsular and Oriental Company should undertake to carry mails to Singapore and Sydney, in Australia, six times a year, constructional arrangements being made whereby the vessels employed could, if necessary, be armed for purposes of war. Unfortunately the outbreak of the Crimean War necessitated the discontinuance of

the Australian service, while the services between India and China had to be substantially reduced.

Brodie Willcox was by this time over seventy years of age, and his first partner, Arthur Anderson, sixty-two. Both of them had lived to see their original little enterprise become one of the greatest shipping companies in the world, and far ahead of all rivals, both in Mediterranean and Indian waters. They had also seen launched in the iron-built, screw-propelled *Himalaya* the noblest vessel of their fleet and one of the finest then in existence. They both lived to see, four years later, the final establishment also of their Government mail service to Australia.

It was a great life-work that they could both look back upon, and in addition they had each undertaken many other responsibilities. Thus Brodie Willcox was for several years a Member of Parliament for Southampton, while from the year 1846 to the year 1852 Arthur Anderson had also represented his native borough in the House of Commons. Brodie Willcox was the first of the two lifelong friends and partners to pass away, dying in 1862 at the ripe age of seventy-nine, being survived for six years by Arthur Anderson, who died at the age of seventy-seven.

That was in the year 1868, one year before the accomplishment of perhaps the greatest engineering feat of all time, and one which was destined to influence very profoundly the future of the Peninsular and Oriental line, namely, the construction

of the great Suez Canal. This project, which had been born in the fertile brain of a young Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps, some thirty years earlier, and had been brought to fruition almost entirely as a result of his personal genius, intuition and undaunted perseverance, meant of course an almost entire revolution in the problems to be faced by all engaged in sea commerce with India and the Far East. Needless to say, however, the Peninsular and Oriental directors had long considered, and were well prepared to take full advantage of, this engineering miracle; and some idea of the extent to which the original enterprise of the early eighteen-hundred-and-thirties had grown in a single generation can be gained from a brief review of the company's position some five years after the opening of the Suez Canal.

It then had a nominal capital of well over £4,000,000, with the names of some two thousand shareholders upon its rolls, and was the owner of large docks and warehouses in England, Calcutta, Bombay, Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia.

Originally beginning as a small and comparatively insignificant line of steamers running between England and Gibraltar, it had by then established regular services to Venice, Brindisi and Egypt; to Suez through the new Canal, and thence to Bombay, Madras and Calcutta; across the Indian Ocean to King George's Sound to Melbourne and Sydney; across the Bay of Bengal, through the Straits of Malacca to Hong Kong,

Swatow, Amoy and Shanghai; and from Shanghai to Yokohama, where it linked up with the American Pacific steamship lines.

British mercantile history can show few more conspicuous examples of the enormous and tangible results flowing from the vision, capacity and individual judgment of two comparatively uninfluential and obscure young men. They have been fortunate in their successors.

In later years much of the progress of the line was due to Sir Thomas Sutherland, who served the company for a period of no less than sixty years, filling the office of managing director for forty-two and that of chairman for thirty-four years. When he took charge of the P. & O. Company's affairs it owned a fleet of 100,000 tons, valued in accounting at £85 a ton. When he retired the company possessed a modern fleet five times as large, which stood in its books, counting cash reserves, at only £8 8s. a ton. Sir Thomas Sutherland's last service was to secure the amalgamation of the company with which he had been so long associated with the British India Steam Navigation Company. Lord Inchcape, already a prominent figure in the commercial world, and known as a far-seeing and sagacious administrator, entered upon the duties of managing director in the autumn of 1914, and afterwards became chairman of the joint board of the two companies and the responsible director of the policy of both. During the War the P. & O.

rendered conspicuous service to the nation, and lost a large proportion of its tonnage. A bold constructional policy was afterwards adopted, and in no long time, by purchase and building, the P. & O. services were again re-established in full efficiency. In 1920 Lord Inchcape was responsible for a remarkable new departure, the establishment of the P. & O. Banking Corporation, which promises to justify the hopes entertained when it was launched on its career.

CHAPTER XV

DONALD CURRIE AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE

Opening up the South African Route—Donald Currie's Early Days—Association with Cunard Company — His First Steamers and their Voyages to the Cape—The Foundations of the Castle Line and its Rivalry with the Union Line—Scheme of Amalgamation—Donald Currie and South African Development—The Boer Wars—Donald Currie and the Relationship between the Navy and the Mercantile Marine.

WE have now traced, in our brief studies of the individual men chiefly responsible, the development of the principal lines of steamship traffic between Great Britain and North America and between Great Britain, India, and the Far East; and we have seen the sea route to the last named shortened by thousands of miles by the cutting of the Suez Canal. In the present chapter it is proposed to consider the origins and development of steam connexion with South Africa, and there can be little doubt that the outstanding personality in this sphere is that of yet another son of Scotland, Donald Currie.

It was not until the year 1862, however—the year of Brodie Willcox's death—that Donald Currie, then thirty-seven years of age, became an independent shipowner; and it was not until ten years later that he dispatched his first steamer

in the South African trade. But a long time before this a beginning of steamship traffic with the Cape had been made by the promoters of what was at first called the Union Steam Collier Company. This was formed in the year 1853, and with one of its directors we have already dealt in the person of Arthur Anderson, the junior partner of Brodie Willcox, of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.

With a capital of only £60,000 and five small steamers, it was the original intention of the directors of this company to confine themselves to coal carrying. Just then, however, came the Crimean War, with the consequent dislocation of sea traffic that affected, as we have seen, not only the P. & O., but also such lines as the Allan Line and the Cunard Line; and the five steamers of the Union Steam Collier Company found more profitable employment in trading between Southampton, Constantinople and Smyrna, where they acted as substitutes for P. & O. steamers that had already been diverted to war services. Later on they themselves were employed by the Government as transports, while a sixth and larger steamer was added to the fleet and similarly chartered.

It was now decided to register the company under the Limited Liability Act, and it became known as the Union Steam Ship Company. When the ships were released from their war duties the directors at first decided to use them in trading

between Southampton and Brazil. This, however, was not found to be a profitable venture; and when, within a few months, the directors obtained a contract from the Government for a monthly mail service to the Cape of Good Hope the Brazilian trade was dropped.

It was on September 15, 1857, that the Cape mail service began, when the little *Dane*, one of the original five steamers, of 580 tons, left Southampton. Two larger steamers were then added to the fleet, and the company undertook to call, in addition, at St. Helena and Ascension. But it was not until the year 1860 that the first steamer of over 1,000 tons was dispatched with the Cape mails by the Union Company.

This was the *Cambrian*, and the company were soon building successors to her of gradually increasing size and speed, while the *Dane* and *Norman*, both among the original vessels, were diverted to establish a service between the Cape of Good Hope and Natal. This service also had soon to be enlarged, and in the year 1864 the company extended its operations to embrace the island of Mauritius. Four years later the service from England to the Cape was increased to once a fortnight, and in 1872 fortnightly sailings were begun between the Cape and Natal.

This was the year in which Donald Currie's line first entered into competition with the Union Steam Ship Company, and let us return, therefore, for a moment to consider his personal career

up to that time. Born at Greenock in 1825, he spent most of his school days at Belfast, but at the age of fourteen returned to his native town to be employed, in a subordinate capacity, in a shipping office. It was not very long, however, before he attracted the attention of one of the high officials of the Cunard Company, and, while still very young, he went to Liverpool to take up an appointment in the offices of this great maritime company.

Liverpool, as we have seen in reviewing the life of John Gladstone, was then seething with prosperous activity. Its great merchants, such as Ewart and William Brown, were at the helm of a score of expanding industries, and to these Samuel Cunard and the McIvers had lent the further stimulus of their genius. To such a youth as Currie the very atmosphere of the town was as tonic and infectious with adventure as that of Bristol had been in the days of the Tudors to the eager apprentices there indentured.

Blessed with a sound constitution and with perhaps more than his share of his native country's proverbial industry and caution, young Currie had also within him an inexhaustible fund of enterprise. So quickly did these qualities become manifest to the directors of the Cunard Company that, when he was only twenty-five, they appointed him their agent and representative at Havre. Their reason for sending him there was that, owing to the recent repeal of the British and

American navigation laws, it was now possible for French and Continental goods to be received into the United States from British vessels. In this the Cunard Company saw an opportunity for successful competition with both French and American lines, and it was therefore decided to establish a service of steamers between Havre and Liverpool, thus challenging the monopoly previously enjoyed by America of the steamship traffic between France and the United States.

It was in many ways a somewhat daring and difficult task, but in Donald Currie the Cunard Company believed that they had laid their hands upon the right man. Nor were they wrong, for during the few years of his service at Havre Currie succeeded in establishing the foundations of a very fruitful and profitable business. He was so successful at Havre, in fact, that they afterwards decided to employ him in a similar capacity both at Antwerp and Bremen, before finally recalling him to Liverpool in order to take up even more responsible duties at headquarters.

By this time, however, the idea of setting up for himself—or being an employer rather than an employee—had taken a firm hold of young Currie's mind, and in the year 1862 he accordingly resigned his position and severed in a perfectly friendly way his personal connexion with the Cunard Company.

With so many friends and business acquaint-

ances both in Europe and America, there now seemed to be an opening before him to enter the lists as a successful rival to his former employers. But his sense of gratitude forbade this, and he decided instead to operate a line of sailing vessels, sailing with the regularity of steamships—a welcome innovation—between Liverpool and Calcutta. We have already traced the origin of the Union Line. This was the beginning of the Castle Line, and the East India sailing ships, *Stirling Castle*, *Tantallon Castle*, *Carnarvon Castle* and *Kenilworth Castle*, were the first children of Currie's new enterprise.

For ten years Currie conducted this trade with Calcutta, via the Cape of Good Hope, with great success, although, as he had long realized, the future of sea-borne commerce lay rather with steam than sails, and although, after about two years, he had decided that it would be more profitable to make London, rather than Liverpool, his English headquarters. Nevertheless it was inevitable that ultimately he should venture into the steamer trade; and it was perhaps characteristic of him that he should, as it were, first feel his way in this respect by becoming a partner in the Leith, Hull and Hamburg Steam Packet Company, whereby he might, with not too much risk, gain practical acquaintance with steamship problems. Meanwhile he decided gradually to substitute steamships for his own sailing vessels, and gave orders for the construction of the

Edinburgh Castle, the *Windsor Castle*, the *Walmer Castle* and the *Dover Castle*.

Yet another possibility, however, had been slowly impressing itself upon his mind during these years; and this was the future of South Africa as a place of British settlement. So strongly, in the end, did this influence him that before his new steamers were completed he had decided to transfer them to this new sphere. Moreover, even while the steamers were being built, he chartered two other steamers, the *Iceland* and *Gothland*, with which he began this enterprise; and accordingly the *Iceland*, the first of Currie's steamers, sailed from Southampton to the Cape in January, 1872.

Now, as we have seen, the Union Line had a monopoly of the British mail service, and this contract was not due to expire until the year 1876. Before that, however, the Cape Government had become deeply impressed with the ability of Currie's management, and he had received a contract from this Government to carry the homeward mails from South Africa. Thus encouraged, he made a bold bid to challenge the Union Steam Ship Company's supremacy in respect of the British mails, and when, in the year 1876, the Cape mail contract again came under consideration, Donald Currie's claims on behalf of his own steamers were found too strong to be resisted. The contract was, therefore, equally divided between the Union and the Castle lines,

an arrangement that continued until 1893, by which time the Castle Line had enlarged its fleet to one of seventeen ocean-going steamers, with a total tonnage of 63,000, two of its vessels, the *Dunottar Castle* and the *Tantallon Castle*, being well over 5,000 tons each.

Meanwhile Donald Currie's interests, both in South Africa and at home, had greatly increased, and amongst the Boers, as well as amongst the British settlers, he had obtained many friends. As a personal friend, for instance, of President Brand, of the Orange Free State, he successfully negotiated with him, on behalf of the British Government, a dispute as to the diamond fields and the Free State boundaries, and for this he was awarded the Companionship of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. When the Transvaal was annexed in the year 1877, and a Boer deputation came over to England to protest, it was Donald Currie who introduced the members to the Colonial Office and obtained for them a full hearing.

This deputation was unsuccessful, and a second came in 1878, Kruger and Joubert being present on both occasions. A man of keen insight, of far-seeing and strongly liberal views, Donald Currie wrote a remarkable letter to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, then Colonial Secretary. In this he suggested possible lines of settlement, that were, in fact, ultimately adopted by the Government, but not until after the first Boer

war, with the disaster of Majuba, had taken place.

Again, in 1878 and 1879, during the Zulu War, Currie lent invaluable aid; and for these further services he received the honour of knighthood, having been elected to Parliament as member for Perthshire in the previous year. It was in this year also that he delivered a memorable lecture at the Royal United Services Institution in which he impressed upon his hearers the desirability of so constructing mercantile steamers that they could, in the event of war, be converted into auxiliary cruisers, and he put before his listeners the advantages of a closer union between the personnel of the mercantile marine and that of the Navy. Many of the suggestions that he then put forward were afterwards acted upon, and in the Great War they bore abundant fruit, as both ourselves and our Allies have grateful cause to remember.

The young clerk, who had left Greenock for Liverpool more than thirty years before, was now a man of wealth, and at last able to purchase an estate for himself in his beloved Perthshire. This was at Garth, near Aberfeldy, to which he afterwards added the property of Glenlyon, thus extending his acres from the River Lyon to the foot of Schiehallion. His love for his new home was typified in the name *Garth Castle* with which he christened one of his new liners, while another of his lifelong friendships, namely, that with

William Gladstone, was to be recognized in the *Hawarden Castle*, launched in 1883.

It was in this year, although not in this particular vessel, that Sir Donald made a memorable trip, carrying among his guests to Copenhagen Mr. Gladstone and Lord Tennyson. Anchoring off Copenhagen, the *Pembroke Castle* then became the scene of a little banquet which was no less a tribute to the personality of the founder of the Castle Line than to the vessel itself and to the British mercantile marine of which it was so worthy a representative. Among the fifty guests, in whose honour the surrounding naval vessels played various national anthems, were the King and Queen of Denmark, the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia, the Princess of Wales (now Queen Alexandra), and the King and Queen of Greece. It must have been a proud moment even for so level-headed and democratic a self-made man as Donald Currie. In 1895 Mr. Gladstone, together with a number of distinguished guests, made another trip with Sir Donald in the *Tantallon Castle* in connexion with the opening of the Kiel Canal.

Meanwhile the Castle Line continued to prosper, and in 1898 the arrangement as to the carriage of mails was renewed for another seven years. That brings its history to the year 1900, when it was decided, after negotiation, to amalgamate the two great South African lines, the management to be in the hands of Donald Currie

& Co., while Sir Francis Evans, the chairman of the Union Line, joined the board of the united concern. Throughout the Boer War the services of the combined fleet were invaluable to the country as transports. In 1909, full of years and honour, Sir Donald Currie passed away, Sir Francis Evans having died two years earlier. In 1912 the Union-Castle Line was acquired by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, a company that in its early days had had rather a chequered career in the West Indian trade, but that had since recovered under good management, and is now one of the largest and most firmly established shipping concerns in the world.

The old traditions of the Union-Castle Line were to suffer no eclipse under the fresh management, and one of the first acts of the new Chairman, Sir Owen Philipps, M.P., was to proceed to the Cape, where a new mail contract was successfully negotiated. Another public-spirited movement, designed to foster the growth of South African agricultural interests, was the granting of the privilege to farmers of sending pedigree stock free of freight in Union-Castle steamers. This concession was much appreciated, and over £250,000 worth of pedigree stock of various kinds has been conveyed by the company under these conditions.

Nor was the company's record in the Great War a whit less brilliant or courageous than those of the lines that we have already dealt with.

Practically the whole fleet was engaged in war work of all imaginable kinds and in every sea. Four of its vessels, the *Armadale Castle*, the *Edinburgh Castle*, the *Kinfauns Castle* and the *Kildonan Castle*, were employed as auxiliary armed cruisers. Many others were used as hospital ships, and of these the *Llandovery Castle*, the *Glenart Castle*, the *Dover Castle* and the *Galeka* were lost.

No less than 350,000 wounded and invalided officers and men were landed at Southampton alone from Union-Castle vessels, while many hundreds of thousands of troops were carried by them to and from all parts of the world. In the Gallipoli landing they played a vital part, and representatives of the line were to be found as far afield as Egypt, South Africa, Russia and India, while many of the American troops crossed the Atlantic in Union-Castle liners.

Immediately after the close of the War orders were placed for new tonnage, and by the time the century reached its majority the *Arundel Castle*, of 15,000 tons, was running on the Cape route and two other vessels of 15,000 tons were nearly complete.

CHAPTER XVI

EDWARD LLOYD AND HIS RECORD

The Distinction between Lloyd's Register and Lloyd's Underwriting Association—Two Great Institutions with a Common Origin—Edward Lloyd's Coffee-house—Early Days of the Register—A1 at Lloyd's—Its Influence on the World's Shipping—Lloyd's Underwriting Association and the Napoleonic Wars—Removal to the Royal Exchange.

WE have now rapidly surveyed the growth of English oversea commerce through the various stages of its evolution. We have seen the independent individual shipowner-captain sailing on his lone-hand ventures. We have seen groups of these men knit into contemporary companies for self-protection and mutual insurance. We have seen the big merchant houses with their own fleets solely employed upon their own business. Finally, we have seen shipping itself, especially since the employment of steam power, developing into a great independent industry of its own. Needless to say, there have been many intermediate stages and all these phases of oversea commercial enterprise have existed contemporaneously.

But these, broadly speaking, have been the chief stages that a study of the subject has revealed; and, before concluding, it would appear only appropriate that we should deal with those

two great institutions, so vitally connected with our merchant shipping, that were to emerge from the enterprise and mental acumen of an obscure coffee-house keeper, Edward Lloyd. One of these institutions is that now known as Lloyd's Register, with its headquarters in Fenchurch Street, an institution that registers and classifies most of the world's shipping. The other is that great association of underwriters, familiarly known as Lloyd's, with its headquarters in the Royal Exchange. These are now distinct and independent bodies, but their origin was a common one; they came into being in a little house of refreshment where the shipping community was wont to congregate in the middle of the seventeenth century.

As we hear of it originally, this small coffee-house was situated in Tower Street, and it is first mentioned in the *London Gazette* of 1668; and here merchants, shipping people and financiers would meet informally to insure their overseas freights against accident and failure. Here too, on the initiative of its proprietor Edward Lloyd, who was quick to perceive its convenience to his patrons, a list of ship sailings, with other shipping news, was regularly posted. Out of these two customs, at first so unofficially and perhaps almost lightly regarded, these two great and separate but allied activities grew—to be ultimately known as Lloyd's Association of Underwriters and Lloyd's Register.

Let us deal first with the Register. It was in

the year 1692 that Edward Lloyd removed his coffee-house to the corner of Abchurch Lane and Lombard Street, where, it is interesting to note, a similar list of sailings had been posted as far back as the reign of Henry VIII. In 1696 Edward Lloyd started a newspaper dealing with maritime affairs, but owing to some rather frank criticism of the House of Lords, it was suppressed a little later and not revived in another form until the year 1726. Clearly as the idea of the register, however, is to be perceived in the posting of these sailing lists and the publication of this newspaper, the earliest known copy of a definite registry of shipping is dated 1764. This contained information as to the age and ownership of vessels, the names of their masters, their tonnages, their equipment of guns, and the number of their crews; while their individual condition was indicated in terms of descending soundness according to the five vowels A, E, I, O, U, their equipment being described in the initials G, M, B, standing for good, medium and bad. Later on these latter initials were replaced by numerals, and A1 at Lloyd's became the designation of a first-class life so far as a ship was concerned.

At first this registry was compiled by underwriters and was known as the Green Book, or Underwriters' Registry, and its perusal was confined, with the greatest stringency, and under severe penalties, to the members of the Society of Underwriters responsible for its publication. At

this time apparently shipowners were content that their vessels should be thus classified by the underwriters without having any say in the matter themselves. But such a system was bound to give rise in time to differences of opinion and considerable resentment; and this was in fact what happened. The shipowners accordingly started a registry of their own, which became known as the Ship Owners' Registry, or Red Book, and these two registries existed side by side to the great inconvenience of the mercantile marine world.

At last the discontent grew to such an extent that, in the year 1823, a committee of inquiry was appointed, consisting of eight merchants, eight underwriters and eight shipowners of London, with nine representatives of the outports. But although they appear to have conducted their investigation with very great care, the financial difficulties were such that their proposals proved abortive. Ten years later, however, Lloyd's decided that the conditions were so unsatisfactory that, at all costs, some solution must be found; and accordingly, without appealing to the Government for financial aid, the amalgamation of the rival registries was accomplished, and Lloyd's Register of Shipping, as we now know it, was finally established. Under the new arrangement the committee consisted of eight merchants, eight underwriters, and eight shipowners, with the chairman of Lloyd's and the chairman of the General Ship Owners' Society as ex-officio members, the right of election to the

committee being given to the committee of the General Ship Owners' Society and the committee of Lloyd's. The principle of classification adopted was to describe as nearly as possible the real and intrinsic quality of the ship dealt with after a due inspection of the reports made by their surveyors, and the documents submitted to the committee.

Originally drawn exclusively from London, in process of time other British ports had direct representatives on this committee, so that at last it became thoroughly typical of the whole shipping community. Later on there was added a technical committee, consisting of representatives of the shipbuilding, engineering, and steel-making industries, and the general influence of this body upon shipbuilding at large has been of the utmost importance. In the year of its commencement, of course, it was only necessary to establish the principles of classification in respect of wooden vessels. Later on and periodically, as the science of shipbuilding progressed, the rules had necessarily to be amplified or expanded to meet new conditions.

The present method of arriving at the value of a vessel and of securing its correct description in the Register is briefly as follows: In the first place the plans of all vessels, including the machinery and boilers of steamers, whose classification is desired by their owners, are submitted for approval to the committee of Lloyd's Register. Thus if a vessel is destined for general trade purposes it

is necessary that she should conform to the required standard of strength laid down by the committee for vessels of this class. On the other hand, if a vessel is to be built for some special trade or purpose she can receive a special classification on that understanding. The plans having been thus submitted, the actual construction of the vessels, including the machinery, is carried out from start to finish under the eyes of the Register's representatives, the steel used having been produced and tested at works approved by the society. Specially trained and experienced inspectors are employed by the society to examine forgings destined for use in the structure of these vessels, and these forgings are carefully supervised throughout the process of their manufacture. Anchors and chain cables are tested at Lloyd's proving houses, which are licensed under the Anchors and Chain Cables Act, 1899. Detailed reports of surveys are sent to the headquarters of the society by the surveyors, where they are considered by the classification sub-committees before being submitted to the general committee for final classification.

Some idea of the work that this necessitates can be gathered from the fact that in one recent year over 1,300 vessels, amounting to more than 4,250,000 gross tons, were classified by Lloyd's Register, and that during that year nearly 9,000 anchors were tested at Lloyd's proving houses, together with over 550,000 fathoms of cable.

Furthermore, the hulls of vessels and the engines and boilers of steamers are required to undergo a periodical inspection at intervals not exceeding four years. When they are six years old boilers are surveyed each year, and shafts are drawn in for examination every second year. All repairs effected, following damage at sea from any cause, are carried out under the inspection of the society's surveyors, and detailed reports of all these surveys are carefully examined by the head-quarters staff and passed by the classification sub-committees, which sit twice a week.

So much for the Register, that in the year 1834 became finally separated from the Underwriting Association. In the opening months of 1921, when just over seven million tons of shipping was under construction in the shipyards of the world, it was responsible for 4,738,953 tons, these figures supplying an index to the position it occupies not only in this country but in other countries also.

Now let us turn to the progress of the institution that had established itself at the Royal Exchange in 1774. By then its members were already so successful as to have created a good deal of envy, and parliamentary criticism had been brought to bear upon their virtual monopoly of marine insurance.

A Select Parliamentary Committee was accordingly at last appointed in 1810 to consider and report upon the entire question; and, on the

whole, Lloyd's may be said to have passed successfully through the ordeal. It was, however, recommended to the House of Commons that the monopoly of Lloyd's for marine insurance should be abolished; but the House of Commons, recognizing that throughout the long years of war with France Lloyd's had frequently supplied the Government with maritime information that the Government itself had been unable to obtain, and recognizing also that its system of commercial intelligence had been of the most profound importance to the whole mercantile world, decided that, at present, no alteration should be made, and Lloyd's continued, therefore, in its same position for another ten years.

The question was then again raised, and it was decided that marine insurance should be thrown open to the commercial public at large. Thus there are in London alone to-day something like a score of marine insurance companies, although Lloyd's still holds its position as *facile princeps* in the sphere that it had opened up.

The next chief epoch in the career of Lloyd's, the underwriting association, was its incorporation by Act of Parliament in the year 1871. The three main objects of the institution were then definitely laid down as the carrying on by its members of the business of marine insurance, the protection of the interests of its members in respect of shipping cargo and freights, and the collection, publication and diffusion of information in respect of

shipping generally. It has always been the object of the committee, the corporation's executive body, to exercise the greatest care and discrimination as to the admission of underwriting members, and to ensure as far as it could that these shall be men of the highest honour and integrity. Every new member is thoroughly scrutinized and has to deposit on election at least £5,000 as caution money for paying his possible liabilities. The aggregate of these deposits is upwards of £4,000,000, held in the hands of trustees; and, in addition to this, every underwriting member of Lloyd's is responsible for his liabilities to the full extent of his own private property and personal belongings.

How important this is and how successfully its great tradition of financial and commercial probity has been fostered can be gathered from the now world-wide repute of Lloyd's and the confidence imposed in its agents in all lands. Thus, while not very long ago any person insuring a ship, cargo or freight was obliged, should it become necessary, to make his claim in London, there are now agents, owing to arrangements made by the committee of Lloyd's, in almost every foreign and colonial port by whom such claims can be settled, to the very great convenience of the widely scattered mercantile marine community.

Finally, let us glance for a moment at the system of intelligence so laboriously perfected by Lloyd's since the early days of the little

Welshman's coffee-house. Thus the movements of every ocean-going vessel are now to be found recorded there. From all parts of the world, at all hours of the day and night, telegrams arrive at Lloyd's announcing such movements. In the year 1875 some 12,000 telegrams were thus received at and sent by Lloyd's. Forty years later this number had increased to nearly 100,000. To secure the efficiency of this great system of intelligence special signal stations have been established and are maintained by Lloyd's in both hemispheres, some fifty thousand vessels being reported from these stations annually in the United Kingdom alone. Every morning *Lloyd's List* still makes its appearance, with the fullest shipping and commercial intelligence.

Such, then, very briefly described, are the activities, so beneficent to the whole world of marine endeavour, of these two great twin institutions, and well might Edward Lloyd, the coffee-house keeper of Abchurch Lane, be a proud man to-day could he but see his name perpetuated in two bodies so integral in the life of modern shipping.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GREAT EXPANSION

The Mistakes of the Historian—Importance of the Individual in Industry, Commerce, and Sea-transport—Geniuses from Humble Homes—Influence on National Policy—Growth of British Merchant Shipping—The Function of the "Tramp"—How the People of the British Isles Live.

OF all the islands of the world, only one group has exercised any considerable and lasting influence on modern history. This group was once part of the continent of Europe, but in the course of the ages first the English Channel and then the North Sea were formed, and thus the British Isles came into existence. They have an area of only 121,633 square miles, being considerably less than one-thirtieth the size of Brazil, China or the United States, about one-tenth the size of Argentina, and not much more than half the size of France. Of this group of islands, the largest is what is now known as Great Britain, consisting of three distinct ethnological divisions—England, Scotland and Wales, with Ireland as an annexe—and of these the first has always bulked most largely on the consciousness of the outside world. In the process of time (in 1707) England and Scotland were united under one sovereignty, and in the following century the Parliaments of Britain and

Ireland were amalgamated. Although Scotsmen have since exercised a commanding influence over the policy of the United Kingdom, England has remained the predominant partner, not only in British affairs, but in the affairs of the widely scattered lands oversea which now pay allegiance to the one sovereign.

The little island which was harried by the Vikings, and for centuries was held in servitude by the Romans, the Normans and others, has now become the pivot of a world-wide Empire with a population of four hundred and forty million souls. It is a unique commonwealth, which is bound together by bonds of common interests and common ideals rather than by force, as was the case with the great empires of the past. To this great expansion the historian offers no adequate explanation—first, because he has never appreciated the influence which the sea has had upon British development; secondly, because he has failed to realize the part which the individual has taken in shaping the national destinies; and, thirdly, owing to his blindness to the interaction of shipping, insurance, commerce, finance and politics. He has been over-impressed by the influence of kings and their councillors, and he has been also over-impressed by the importance of military operations. He has ignored the various springs of individual enterprise which, flowing on from generation to generation, have at last swollen into a wide,

sweeping stream of effort dominated by fealty to liberal principles.

In these days, when we are confronted with great commercial corporations and labour combinations, there is a danger that the importance of the individual may be overlaid. There is the temptation, on the one hand, to look to the Government for the solution of every problem of transport, industry, commerce and finance, forgetting that the Government consists, as a rule, of individuals who have risen to power with little or no knowledge of either of these spheres of national activity. There is also, on the other hand, the growing tendency on the part of predominant influences in the labour world to restrain individual effort, forgetting that this country owes practically everything to the individual and little or nothing to the great mass of ordinary men. The pioneers who laid the foundations, not only of this country's prosperity, but of the prosperity of the whole Empire, have been men of varied genius. No small proportion of them came out of humble homes, where they learnt the simple domestic virtues—honesty, devotion to duty, and thrift—which are characteristic of our race. They were men who owed practically nothing to the State in raising themselves to eminence; in their upward movement they benefited not only themselves, but their fellows by offering them increased scope of usefulness, and they conferred upon their country lasting benefits.

It is to these men of native genius that the population of Britain owes its position as the sea-carriers of the world and as a great community of manufacturers. It is owing to their far-sighted work that this country, which in Queen Elizabeth's reign supported only about five million people, is now able to maintain, at a far higher level of comfort, a population of forty-seven million. It is also owing to their influence that the liberal principles which have found expression in our political, commercial and industrial life have spread far and wide over the world. Long before Parliament or the Press exercised anything approaching the influence which they now possess, these men represented the heart of England, and, though years of delay often occurred, it was their voices which at last found expression in national policy. They were in the main responsible for finding employment for the rapidly increasing population, as they were also chiefly responsible for creating those great ocean services which enabled our traders to compete on advantageous terms in the great markets of the world, since sea-carriage is always less costly than land-carriage.

To how great an extent the work of these pioneer sea traders has borne fruit may be gathered from a brief glance at the British mercantile marine at the outbreak of the late war. Not only was it the largest, the most up-to-date, and the most efficient in existence, but it actually com-

prised nearly one-half of the total steam tonnage of the world. More than four times as large as that of its then nearest rival, the German merchant navy, the bulk of its tonnage consisted of ocean-going vessels. It was fortunate, both for ourselves and our Allies and for every liberty-loving nation, that it was so, for without these immense resources the ultimate victory of the Allies in the Great War would have been impossible, and it was the comparatively small, comparatively slow, and quite inconspicuous vessels—"the tramps"—that made the chief contribution to this triumph.

As a witty contemporary has said with a good deal of truth in reference to the recent warlike operations on land, when one looked for a great individual hero, one found only a mob. It was the obscure private that, in the long run, won the war on land; and at sea it was much the same. It was not the luxurious passenger liner, steaming at high speed, it was not even the big cargo liner; it was, above all, the tramp, buffeting her patient way over the world's seas, that was the chief maritime instrument of victory, apart from the Grand Fleet. The tramp was the lineal successor of those earlier individual vessels owned by single enterprising sea traders who laid the foundations of our prosperity, and it was appropriate that these unconsidered vessels should in our experience have vindicated so gloriously their ancient traditions.

In the sea life of our Empire the work of these

tramp vessels is apt to be overlooked; but, while some forty per cent. of our pre-war steam tonnage consisted of what may be termed liners, our tramps exceeded this figure by a third. Upon these we were dependent for the transport of the rougher kinds of cargo for which the larger and speedier liners were quite unsuitable. Ready to sail at short notice with any sort of goods to any sort of port, this Empire, as well as a very large proportion of the sea-trading world, was, and is still, vitally indebted to them for economic life. With a speed of eight or nine knots, they acted as carriers between far-distant ports, covering routes where scheduled sailings were rare or unknown.

Many of these tramps, of course, for months, or years even, may not see a harbour in the British Isles. They are plying upon profitable voyages with chance cargoes between ports remote from us by thousands of miles. And it was this great floating reserve—this volume of "loose tonnage" as it is called—upon which we were able to draw in our time of need, saving the vast population of these islands from starvation during the acutest stage of the submarine warfare, besides rendering essential aid to our Allies. An example was given some time ago by the late Sir Douglas Owen of a typical tramp voyage, during which a steamer, on her first voyage, went twice round the world. Leaving Glasgow in ballast for Philadelphia, she there loaded up with cases of oil. These were

destined for Japan, and, in order to save Canal dues, the vessel travelled via the Cape. In Japan she picked up a cargo of rice, and took it to Brisbane, in Australia. From Brisbane she sailed to Tasmania, and thence back to Bombay, whence she proceeded to Burmah, where she loaded up with a cargo for Buenos Ayres. From Buenos Ayres she rounded Cape Horn with a cargo for Chile; and thence she sailed in ballast for San Francisco and Portland, Oregon. Here she took on board a cargo for Japan. From Japan she went to Java, and from Java she set sail for home again with a cargo of sugar for Greenock. Such was a representative voyage of one of these tramp steamers of which the bulk of our mercantile marine consists, depending for profitable employment largely upon the shrewdness and intuition and opportunity-seizing powers of the individual owner.

In the foregoing life-stories of the great sea traders and their companions ashore we have seen how the sea genius of our race created the shipping industry. What it has meant to that little England, obscure and conquered, of our first chapter the following figures show. In the year before the War there poured into these islands about fifty-five million tons of imports—imports having a total money value of nearly £770,000,000. In the same year, from the erstwhile island home of John Philpot and his meagre two and a half million compatriots, there were exported a hundred

million tons of goods, of a total money value of £635,000,000. Apart from this, as we have said, more than half of the world's trade was carried in British ships, and actually one-third of the total sea trade between foreign countries trading with each other. Three remarks are prompted by these figures. In the first place, in our depreciated currency of post-war days these values would have to be nearly doubled; in the second place, the disproportion between the weights of imports and exports is due mainly to the fact that 75 per cent. of our exports consisted of coal, a heavy commodity, the value of which was only £54,000,000, or about one-twelfth of the value of our exports; in the third place, the visible imports and exports were more than balanced by the invisible exports in the form of freights of shipping, the services rendered abroad by British banks and insurance offices, and by the earnings of British capital invested in foreign countries.

Statistics are dull, but the figures which have been given prove on examination to be eloquent. They explain in large measure how forty-seven million people can now live in the British Isles, where nine hundred years ago only two and a half millions existed. The standard of employment of the British people depends upon the volume of foreign trading in all its various forms and on the cheap and efficient activities of British merchant shipping. Day by day a process of exchange goes on: in return for British services

—the making and carrying of goods, the arranging of finance and the insurance against loss—we receive most of the food by which we live and the main part of the raw materials used in our factories and workshops. All this business with the outside world, since we live in an island, must be done in ships.

Shipping is the essential industry of an island people, and it has been the medium by which we have prospered and assisted other nations to prosper. An American historian—Admiral Mahan—has borne testimony to the fruits of British sea-power traceable to the British Navy, which is the child of the British mercantile marine. "Why do English innate political conceptions of popular representative government, of the balance of law and liberty, prevail in North America from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific? Because the command of the sea at the decisive era belonged to Great Britain. In India and Egypt administrative efficiency has taken the place of a welter of tyranny, feudal struggle and bloodshed, achieving thereby the comparative welfare of the once harried populations. What underlies this administrative efficiency? The British Navy. . . . What, at the moment the Monroe Doctrine was proclaimed, insured beyond peradventure the immunity from foreign oppression of the Spanish-American colonies in their struggle for independence? The command of the sea by Great Britain, backed by

the feeble navy but imposing strategic position of the United States, with her swarm of potential commerce destroyers which a decade before had harassed the trade of even the mistress of the seas." We might point also to the autonomous dominions of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—all the fruits of sea-power. So that in tracing the expansion of the little island which was held under the heel of successive conquerors in earlier centuries we are not surveying a purely selfish movement; in conferring blessings on ourselves we have also blessed others.

We have laid bare the secret of the island. It consists of its sea-power cultivated by men of native genius from age to age. The Sea Traders have been the pioneers of liberal thought and action, as they have been the founders of a system of exchange of goods and services which enables forty-seven million people to live in a group of islands which even in the Golden Age supported only about one-tenth of that population. The secret of this little island, thrown off from the side of Europe, consists of the strength which it draws from the sea and the influence which the sea has had upon the development of individual character and the creation of national characteristics peculiarly British.

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Printed in England by
Cassell & Company, Limited,
London, E.C.4.
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